"Entering (my) home and luring me (to Thine) why didst Thou keep me prisoner in Thy heart's cavern, Oh Arunachala?
-The Marital Garland of Letters, Verse 3.

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

Vol.1 July 1964 No.3

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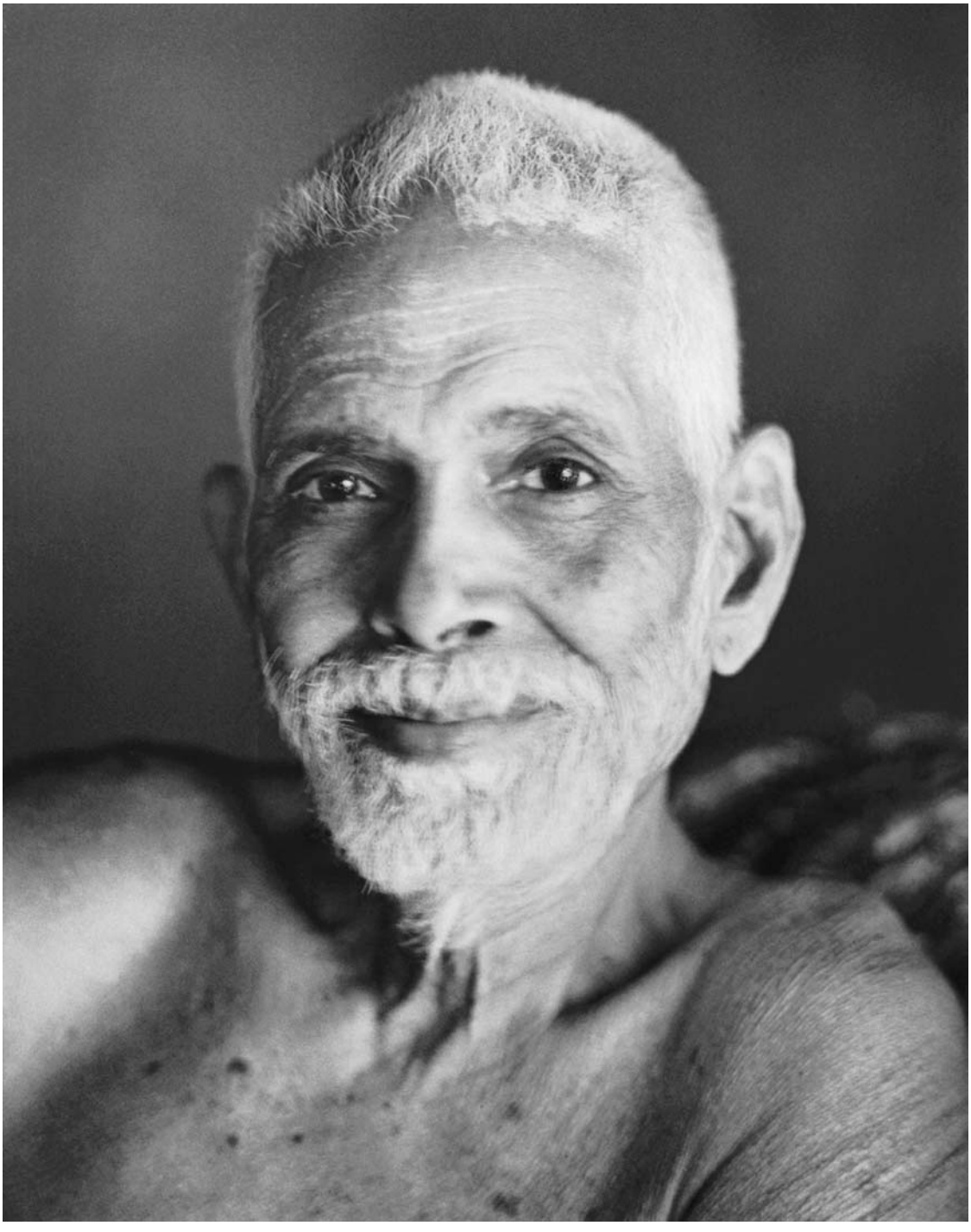


Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

The Mountain Path

(QUARTERLY)

Editor: Arthur Osborne

VOL. 1 JULY, 1964 No. 3

A PATH AND A GUIDE

(EDITORIAL)

'Sri J. Krishnamurti in one of his radio talks has stated that the Saints have brought in all the miseries in this world. He asks us not to follow any pattern of life and says that we should live moment to moment. He also says that we should not have any desire or aspiration in life. I feel that his statements are all confusing and in short a dry philosophy. Can you kindly enlighten me on the subject?' - R. S. SHIVAKUMAR, Madras.

I quote this letter at the head of the Editorial instead of in the 'Letters to the Editor' section because it goes far to explain the need for this editorial. It is characteristic of appeals for explanation that one receives, either orally or in writing, from people who are confused at being told by one who is regarded as a spiritual teacher not to accept any spiritual teaching or teacher, but to follow no path, strive for no goal, entertain no aspiration.

If, as maintained in my two previous editorials, Realization is the purpose of life, it follows naturally that its quest is the first and greatest call upon a man's efforts. If life is a path to be trod "from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, from death to Immortality", as said in the Upanishads, and if, as the Masters have warned, it leads through unknown terrain and past dangerous pitfalls, it also follows that a guide is necessary to show the way. Questions of the choice of path and reliability of the guide will be taken up in later issues; first it seems necessary to dwell on this seemingly so obvious point of the need for accepting a guide and following any path at all. For although more people today than ever before can read about the consummation attainable, not a few do so as dilettantes without any intention of making the effort to attain.

Unfortunately this tendency, strong anyway owing to natural inertia, has been apparently sanctioned by the writings and speeches of J. Krishnamurti, who seems to have made it his life work to proclaim that no effort need be made and no guide followed. Some of his followers (how can there be followers if there is no guide?) do indeed explain that he does not really mean that no effort is needed, but that is the impression his books and speeches give, whether intended or not. If the impression is not intended it is a pity it is given; it is a pity it is given whether intended or not.

It is easy to see how someone could, come to this conclusion, erroneous though it is. Glimpses of higher perception, even of complete Self-realization,

glimpses called in Zen *'satori'*, do come to a person who is still on the path or even to one who has not consciously set foot on it and does not even know that there is a path. There are many instances of this. Whole collections of them have been published. A characteristic of them is that they occur spontaneously and most often at a time when one is not making conscious effort. On receiving such a glimpse a person unacquainted with the teaching of the Sages might say to himself: "So this is it! And no discipline was necessary, and no Master!"

However, such glimpses do not mean that one has attained Realization. The Maharshi was quite definite about this. "Can the ego, which is in bondage as the mind, become the Divine Self simply because it has once glimpsed that it is the Self? Is this not impossible without the destruction of the mind? Can a beggar become a king by simply visiting a king and declaring himself one?"[1] And again: "Realization takes time to steady itself. The Self is certainly within the experience of everyone but not in the way people imagine. One can only say that it is as it is .... Owing to the fluctuations of the *vasanas* (inherent qualities), Realization takes time to steady itself. Spasmodic Realization is not enough to prevent rebirth, but it cannot become permanent as long as there are *vasanas* .... But if this is to be established further effort is necessary."[2]

The brief eternity of such a glimpse may fail to be understood and assimilated, fail to absorb the mind and dissolve the ego, and may thus leave a man unchanged so far as he or others can see. An example of this is Tennyson. He wrote in a letter to a friend: ".... a kind of waking trance I have frequently had, right up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has generally come upon me through repeating my own name two or three times to myself, silently, till all at once, as it were out of the intensity of consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being: and this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clear, the surest of the sure, the weirdest of the weird, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction, but the only true life .... I am ashamed of my feeble description. Have I not said the state is utterly beyond words?" He further indicates a characteristic paradox of this experience in a pregnant line occurring in an otherwise drab passage of 'The Princess': "And all things were and were not." And yet even though, as a poet, he must be supposed to have had more intuition than most people, he never understood it and it seems to have enlightened neither his life nor poetry. A man may even forget and deny it. Koestler describes in his early autobiography how such an experience of certitude came to him when he was a prisoner in the Spanish Civil War, expecting to be shot; and yet years later, in his superficial investigation into *samadhi* in '*The Yogi and. the Robot*' he showed himself sceptical of the very possibility of it. Only in very rare cases does such a pre-glimpse become permanent and stabilised. One such case was that of Ramana Maharshi[3] and he was quite insistent that when it does not remain continued, persistent effort is needed.

It is said by Krishnamurti that one should abide in the true state of effortless, choiceless awareness and that effort only disturbs this. But can one? About this also the Maharshi was quite definite. "Effortless and choiceless awareness is our real nature. If we can attain that state and abide in it, that is all right. But one cannot reach it without effort, the effort of deliberate meditation. All the age-old *vasanas* (inherent tendencies) turn the mind outwards to external objects. All such thoughts have to be given up and the mind turned inwards and that, for most people, requires effort. Of course, every teacher and every book tells the aspirant to keep quiet, but it is not easy to do so."[4]

1 *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own words*, p. 177, Rider's edition, 228, Sri Raman-asramam edition.
2 Ibid., pp. 178/228-9.

3 For an account of this see *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*, pp. 18-19, Rider & Co., London.

If any one doubts this let him try for himself instead of weighing the statement of one teacher against that of another. Let him sit down and maintain effortless, choiceless awareness of being without allowing any distracting thoughts to come in and see whether he can keep it up for even thirty seconds. If not let him not speak of stillness as an alternative to effort. Stillness is only achieved through effort.

Another argument used is that one actually is the Self. Since there is no other, one must be. So why strive to be the Self? And, they add, the Maharshi himself said so. Certainly he did, but he also exhorted us to strive to realize this and not just understand it theoretically. Partly perhaps to guard against the Scylla and Charybdis on either side of the true path - on the one hand that no effort is needed and on the other that a man by his own effort can create or attain the true state - he sometimes represented the effort required as a negative process. "All you have to do is to disrealize unreality and Reality remains." This is a traditional explanation given by the Sages: if the clouds are removed the clear sky remains; if water-lilies have overgrown a pond they only have to be removed for the water to appear; it does not have to be created.

The attitude taken up by some Western exponents of Zen that all you have to do is to be spontaneous is another, more subtle example of the same error that no effort is needed, for spontaneity itself is not easy. Or rather there is a lower and a higher spontaneity. A child of three toddles into a room and bangs spontaneously on the piano and there is a hideous din; an expert pianist plays spontaneously and there is music; the difference between the two spontaneities is years of effort and discipline.

Much is made in Western Zen of sudden Enlightenment coming as a result of a blow or a cryptic saying. Enlightenment, of course does come suddenly in any religion, just as does the pre-glimpse I spoke of at the beginning of this article, but it only comes to one who has disrealized unreality to such an extent as to be receptive to it. One who has not may receive a hundred blows or have his nose tweeked daily without waking to Reality. As for spontaneity, a Master in any religion behaves with childlike spontaneity. As Christ put it, he is like a little child. The naturalness of Bhagavan was as striking as his grandeur. But to try to imitate this would only make one a poseur. Hanging apples on a tree does not make it an apple tree. What, is needed is to attain the inner state that manifests outwardly as true spontaneity; and this can only be done by persistent and disciplined effort.

But even if effort is needed, why a guru, some ask. Once one grants that the Sages knew what they were talking about when they said it was an arduous path beset with dangers, it should be obvious that it is safer to be guided on it by one who has gone before and knows the way. That is one explanation; another is that the guru is a man of power. Grace flows through him to strengthen and support his followers. If you are serious about assaying a tremendous task, why light-heartedly reject aid which has always been considered necessary in all but very exceptional cases? If it has been found that oxygen is needed to climb Everest, why set out to do it without? And this is more than Everest.

Intellectuals are apt to consider only the first of these two explanations and to think of the Guru as one who explains the hidden mysteries and removes their philosophical doubts; but the infusion of power and removal of impediments is an even more important function and indeed may in some cases suffice with no theoretical instruction at all. In illustration of this I will quote from a powerful but little known Guru of recent times, an almost illiterate Bengali woman who spoke no other language and yet had disciples who were not Bengalis and to whom she could not speak, that is Sri Sarada Devi, the widow of Sri Ramakrishna. "The power of the Guru enters into the disciple and the power of the disciple enters into the Guru. That is why when I initiate and accept the sins of the disciple I fall sick.

4 *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own words*, pp. 70/83.

It is extremely difficult to be a Guru." And on another occasion when someone protested against her allowing an unworthy person to touch her feet, since it would cause her pain, actual physical pain and burning, she said: "No, my child, we are born for this purpose. If we do not accept others' sins and sorrows and do not digest them who else will? Who will bear the responsibilities of the wicked and the afflicted"[5] In Christianity Christ is "He that taketh upon himself the sins of the world"; and in Hindu mythology Siva is represented as blue-throated from the poison of human iniquity that he swallowed.

5 *Holy Mother*, being the Life of Sri Sarada Devi, Wife of Sri Ramakrishna and Helpmate in his Mission, pp. 171 and 172, by Swami Nikhilananda, Allen and Unwin.
I have taken the liberty in quoting these sayings, translated as they are from the original Bengali, of substituting the word 'guru' for the author's 'teacher', since the latter word would invite the very mistake against which I am protesting of equating the Guru with an instructor.

What then of the modern craving to be self-reliant? Who is the self on which you are to be reliant? That very ego, that very individual being, whom you believe to be a phantom and hope to dissolve into nothingness.

And who is the Guru? How can anyone outside you guide you to the Self of you? The Guru is not outside you. The essential Guru is the Self in your heart. The Maharshi often reminded his disciples that the outer Guru exists only to awaken the inner Guru in the heart. When that has been done he ceases to be necessary. Can one then not dispense with the outer Guru? So long as you feel that you exist in the body, so long will the Guru also exist outwardly and his Grace strengthen and refresh you in your efforts. When you feel (not merely recognise theoretically but feel constantly) that you are not the body and feel inner grace and awareness surge up from your own heart, the Guru also will not need to be manifested outwardly in a body. But as long as you live in fact on one plane it is no use arguing from another.

THE NEED FOR REMEMBRANCE

From JOEL GOLDSMITH

If truth is not actively maintained in consciousness, life becomes one of futility, a waiting for something to happen. The hoped-for and long-awaited spiritual awakening, which many people desire, but towards attainment of which they make no effort, does not happen except perhaps once in a hundred years, or possibly to one out of a million persons - and even then, as we know from the history of many to whom it has happened, it is of no value, because it came unexpectedly without understanding and without any idea or knowledge of how to recapture it .....

The degree in which truth is kept active in consciousness determines not only the degree of our ultimate spiritual illumination, but the time of it. It could be tomorrow, next week, next month or next year; but that moment we determine by whether or not truth is kept active in our consciousness for an hour on Sunday, an hour every day, two or three minutes out of every hour in the day, or ultimately with almost every breath we breathe. It is possible to 'pray without ceasing' if we know the inspired passages of Scripture and those of mystical or metaphysical writings, if we are willing to remember to apply them, and, above all, if we are able to overcome the inertia of the human mind.

(*Our Spiritual Resources*, pp. 104-106, Allen & Unwin.)

RAMANA SAD-GURU

By G. L. N.

Sri Bhagavan has said of Arunachala in his 'Padikam'[1]: "My Lord! when anyone asks me of Your greatness You hold me motionless like a statue, with bowed head." Similarly do I find that my mind falls numb when I would write about Bhagavan Sri Ramana.

Who is our Arunachala Ramana? He himself gave the answer when he wrote: "In the recess of the lotus-heart of all, from Vishnu downwards, there shines as pure Consciousness the *Paramatman* who is the same as Arunachala or Ramana."[2]

Sri Bhagavan was gracious enough to refer to this once when I was taking leave of him to return to my native place. He said: "Have you seen this morning's mail? Someone has written that Arunachala Ramana is everywhere, so that whenever he has an urge to come here that feeling makes him postpone his visit."

Humbly I replied expressing my own point of view, which was quite different from that expressed in the letter: "Bhagavan, in this body I have realized you in your divine form as my Guru, my Bhagavan. Once having seen you, neither I nor any other can shake off the feeling of love for your divine form."

At that time I was attending to the Ashram correspondence. I drafted a reply to the letter in question, showed it to Bhagavan for his approval and sent it off[3]. His remark about this letter must have been his parting message to me, as it turned out that this was to be the last time I ever saw him.

Sri Bhagavan also affirmed his universal nature in the following manner in his benedictory verse to 'Atma Sakshatkara', which he translated into Tamil: "Atma Sakshatkara, which was taught by Ishwara[4], to his son Guha, is now propounded in Tamil by that same Lord, the Dweller within me, the Ancient, the Supreme."[5]

The power of Bhagavan is eternal and above all *siddhis* (supernatural powers). A *siddhi* is transient, but Bhagavan is a Healer whose cure is permanent. He kindles aspiration in the heart of those who come to him oblivious of their eternal nature, turns their mind inward with the enquiry 'Who am I?' and helps them to realize the Self for whom the word 'I' stands.

The main type of *upadesa* (instruction) used by Bhagavan is Silence, as it was with Dakshinamurti[6] of old. Divine bliss permeated those who sat around him. In this silence the doubts of his devotees are cleared up and their questions are either answered or fade away and cease to appear necessary. This silence is a dynamic force, eternal and universal in nature.

Nevertheless, though universal, it is centred at the Ashram where he lived, at Tiruvannamalai, at Arunachala, the spiritual centre of the world. Here again there are the two points of view, both true although apparently contradictory.

Sri Ramana's Grace acts always, but, inscrutably and in diverse ways. We find his

1 '*Eleven Verses on Sri Arunachala*'.

2 *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, p. 98, Rider's edition, p. 110 in Sri Ramanasramam edition.

3 Bhagavan never wrote letters himself. All letters were answered punctually, the same day, the replies being drafted in the office and submitted to him for his approval or correction. (Editor).

4 The Personal God.

5 *The Collected Works*, pp. 106/121.

6 Siva manifested as a youthful Guru with elderly disciples whom he taught in Silence.

gracious and profound utterances in the small volume of his *Collected Works*, in collections of his reported sayings and in books about him. That is food for the mind, but when the mind is turned inwards by the enquiry 'Who am I?' he is there in the heart, ever watchful, ever helpful. He does not allow the soul to get drowned but draws it mercifully to his eternal abode[7]. Sometimes he appears in dreams and visions, blessing and encouraging his old devotees and others too who never saw him in the body.

In '*The Marital Garland of Letters to Sri Arunachala*' he wrote: "Mere thought of Thee has drawn me to Thee, Oh Arunachala."

7. An allusion to his '*Necklet of Nine Gems*', verse 9.

Alluding to this once, I said, "Bhagavan, the thought of Arunachala drew you here, but is it not still more wonderful that you drew us here, who had never heard of you, and lopped off our ego?"

His answer was his usual gracious and benign smile.

Sri Ramana is an ocean of nectar teeming with kindliness. He is gracious and forgiving. Were he to dwell on our slips and faults we would be lost, but, ignoring them, he still guides us. He instils hope when we are dejected and stretches out his supporting hand to lead us towards the goal. The only things required of us are perseverance and faith in him.

PATTINATHU SWAMI

By K. R. R. Sastry

He was a merchant prince living in Kaveripattinam in the 15th Century. His ships sailed to foreign lands. Suddenly he realized that "No wealth will follow you on your last journey" and gave it all up, setting forth as a wandering mendicant from the shrine of Tiruvottiyur.

Like our Maharshi, he taught the hard way of detachment. The world with its treasures has only a phenomenal reality and must be spurned in order to realize Paramatma, which alone is Real.

One of his Tamil poems runs:

When the last coma sets in, when the eyes shrink
And the senses fail,
When the body becomes as though unreal,
My last prayer to Thee,
Lord of Tiruvottiyur, is this
May I wear Thy holy ashes,
With hands outstretched above,
May I call Thy holy Name, Oh Siva!

And this one is his plea for Realization

Not running here and there,
Nor working on vain pursuits,
Unprejudiced,
Seeking the company of the holy,
Putting aside anger,
Clinging fast to virtue,
May I receive from Thee the Everlasting Wealth,
Oh Lord of Chidambaram!

Beyond Psychology

By Prof. K. Subrahmanyam

In his 'Sad Vidya' or 'Forty Verses on Reality'[1] Bhagavan indicates the Supreme Reality which can be approached only through the way of mysticism. Mystical experience can neither be gained nor explained by psychology, which is the study by the human intelligence of its own mental mechanism, its processes and products. This study is often held to postulate some urge behind the mechanism, but any such urge is very different from the Reality which is Knowledge free from thoughts. "There is, brethren, an unborn, a not-become, a not-made, a not-compounded. If there were not this unborn, not-become, not-made, not-compounded there could not be any escape from what is born, become, made and compounded." Nirvana, thus referred to by the Buddha, is the same as what Bhagavan means by Reality. But psychology can only concern itself with "the born, become, made and compounded."

According to Hindu philosophy, Being is enveloped in progressively finer *kosa* or sheaths. The most gross of these is brute, inert matter. This is, of course, insentient and is ignored by psychology. It is known as *annamaya kosa* or 'the food sheath', being food for all organisms. Next comes the *pranamaya kosa* or 'breath sheath', in which intelligence acts only as the vital, biological instinct. This, still below the level of psychology, reacts mechanically to stimuli for the purposes of self-preservation and procreative self-perpetuation. At the next higher level of *manomaya* or 'mind sheath', intelligence has created for itself a mental machine. Here is a more continuously purposive functioning, though the purposiveness is often unconscious. A 'computer' machine can perform some at least of the work of the mind at this level, but no machine can choose its own purpose, though it can function efficiently once its purpose has been chosen for it and 'the works' set accordingly by its owner. It is only at the *vijnanamaya* or 'intelligence' level that the human intelligence chooses its purposes, judges its own functioning with reference to them and begins asking the question 'what for?', which was never raised in the lower sheaths. Now it delights in its own working and loves to know for the joy of knowing. The vital, biological, instinctive urge has been transcended as sole motive power. The science of psychology, like all other sciences, has its birth at this level.

But the sciences falter as they approach its upper frontiers, where it touches the fifth or *anandamaya kosa*, that is 'the Sheath of Bliss'. The mind here begins to lose self-confidence. The instruments on which it has relied so far, the senses and reason, no longer seem authoritative in their reports and findings! Are space and time themselves, the framework within which reason operates, absolute entities? The concepts of 'duration' and 'extension' and the appearance of the 'space-time continuum' are portents threatening the rule of *vijnana*. Browning's Abt Vogler declared that out of three sounds he framed, not a fourth (composite) sound, but a star. The rules of arithmetic were themselves in danger! Besides, the human intelligence began to recognise that reason was not the only power it could rely on. As Croce pointed out, we do not understand a sentence by sticking together the meanings of its words. At some early stage in the understanding of it - the more intelligent and seasoned the reader, the earlier the stage - the intelligence makes a leap and lands on the meaning of the whole sentence; and words, thereafter, have only a confirmatory function. This power, in use from day to day, is 'intuition', whether psychologists like it or not. Even the scientist can only heap up mounds of data and await the moment when he can leap to the top of them all with a victorious

1 See *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Rider & Co., London, and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

hypothesis! Inventors have made similar admissions of a saltatory power, but for which they would have been helpless. Studies such as Aesthetics, Ethics and Metaphysics are founded on urges over which reason and mechanistic modes of thinking have never really had any valid jurisdiction. But their usurpation has been of long standing; and nineteenth century science, overflowing into the twentieth, has conferred its own worthless validating charter on the forces of the fourth *kosa* aggressing across the frontiers into the fifth. Psychology must be confronted, at least at this late stage, with a *quo warranto* writ, when it presumes to operate in the region of *Sad Vidya*, which I would translate as the 'Urge to Pure Being'. It is an urge, at once all-conquering and all-pervading; and reason, with all its presumption, has been only living, all along, on its leavings. *Vidya*, here, is not a 'science' or a 'lore'; it is the power of '*Sat*' (Being) bursting through the obscurations of the human mind. "How can the mind-moon measure the light of the Sun which is Reality? (Verse, 22)."

Spiritual life begins when the Sun of Reality sets the pace for the activities of mind and its retinue, reversing the usual process. President Radhakrishnan is fond of a story of a group of Hindu sages visiting ancient Athens and being proudly informed by the Athenian philosophers that they were seeking, with their investigations, to master all human phenomena. The Hindus asked; "But how can you master things human without first mastering the superhuman?" The *Gita* and *Upanishads* express this truth when they describe the Universe as an *aswatha*-tree with its roots above and branches below.

"From the Ultimate to the proximate" - this seems to be the law of progression in spiritual life. Bhagavan begins his teaching with the Being which is Knowing and then comes down to *Mahesa*, the personal God, and only then to ourselves and the world we cognise. No building up of Truth is possible with all our efforts, intellectual and moral. We can never earn Liberation. Love, whether from God or man, is a total act, without processes and constituents. It cannot be built out of parts; it cannot be led up to; reason, marshalling inter-connected propositions, cannot scientifically construct or explain it. It is basic, primal to the universe; no otherwise can it exist. The Buddha speaks of Love that stands aloft, alone, looks out in all directions and radiates its power to all beings in the universe, seen and unseen, born and unborn! Love is so all-sufficient to itself that it does not need even beneficiaries! The transition is abrupt from all our efforts, merits and attainments to that which is Being-Knowing-Love. This abruptness is brought home to us by the *Upanishad* which even represents it as arbitrariness. "Brahman reveals Itself to him whom It chooses." At a more human level our teachers have emphasised the need for Grace and Love and framed the doctrine of prevenience. It is not our prayer that leads us to God. God first prays through us. "Thy cry, 'Allah, where art Thou?' was itself My answer 'here I am,'" says a Sufi. Unless the whole is known as the whole (and, therefore, the Alone), nothing is known. "The flight of the alone to the Alone" is not locomotion or a process. 'Science', which belongs to the fourth level, does not seem to have a place here.

Nevertheless, it is not at the *Anandamaya Kosa* level that the consummation takes place. The sages who called it a *kosa* made it evident that this *ananda* is less than the *Ananda*-aspect of the Supreme, *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. Bhagavan is firm that even this *kosa* is only a constituent of the body. He says so, almost in passing, in verse 5. Most of us are stationed at the meeting point of the fourth and fifth levels. We have to look below and above. At the level below, we find that the mind has throughout been acquisitive and domineering. It has added to its possessions and power by gathering knowledge (which itself requires a certain mode of strenuous discipline) and by imposing, order on what it has come to know. This order, which the mind calls 'the laws of nature', which it professes to have only discovered, is shaped by the mind's shape, though the mind does not know it. At the level above, as the mind enters into it, it

gains awareness of quite another kind. In place of the excitement of conquest, which it has experienced hitherto, it now knows the bliss of being conquered. We may call it a passive state if we please, because it is not induced by our desiring it and willing it. St. Gregory the Great distinguishes between the pleasures which we desire before we get them (and which are, after we have had them, productive of disgust) and the spiritual pleasures which we did not care for before we had them, but which we devotedly cherish when they have bestowed themselves on us. The *ananda* of the fifth level seems passive because it is of the latter kind. This is a creative passivity. Even as the mind is overwhelmed and subjugated, it delights in the mastering power holding it inescapably in its embrace and participates in its act, even to the point of abiding in energetic identification with this power. In such 'passive' moments the human intelligence grows in bliss and strength and gains the assurance that it is moving towards its own fulfilment. It has only to make itself receptive and Reality pours into it, exalting it. The seeming magnitude or triviality of the occasion (by any conventional, external standard) is irrelevant, because it is the welling up from the depth that matters, not the accidental opening of the surface soil by the pickaxe. Sri Ramakrishna mentions a recluse on a Himalayan slope who spent his life in front of a beautiful waterfall, ever murmuring "Thou hast done well, O Lord, Thou hast done very well indeed." A thing of beauty is a joy forever, not in the sense that the thing itself will endure for ever, but because the joy it provides is an emanation of the one source that endures. In this sense the 'thing' is an Epiphany. So are acts of genuine, pure ethical value, whether they be "little, nameless unremembered acts of kindness and of love" or astounding acts of martyrdom. The 'science' of Ethics will never explain the ethical, urge.

It, is good to dwell for a while on the level of the *anandamaya kosa*, for beyond this there is neither guide nor signpost such as can he provided by our own experience! And yet there is a long way to go. This is the springboard from which one has to take the plunge like a diver who, with breath and speech controlled, seeks the treasure sunken in the stream (verse 28). *Odungutal* (the progressive subsidance of the self) and *onrutal* (one-ing) were favourite words with Bhagavan; the last *kosa* of all teaches us how in passivity of a certain kind is positive strength and how the intelligence must consent to be submerged in order that it may be exalted and fulfilled. Here is another mystery which is a challenge to reason - the unreality of our individual selves, our physical bodies and the material world. Commonsense refuses to admit that these are unreal and yet their unreality has been repeatedly proclaimed by the seers. Bhagavan explains how they are real only within the Real (Verse 8). That one is real in the measure in which one responds to the 'Reality of That Which Is' is illumined by the mystery of artistic creation. The emotions are like brick and mortar; they belong to the sphere of the mason. The tranquillity is the presiding power which belongs to the architect. The emotions and the tranquillity do not cancel each other out because they belong to different levels and spheres altogether. It is in this light that Verses 17 and 18 - on the reality of the physical body and the material world - are to be understood.

Evil and suffering are so real to the sufferer and are so poignant for one who witnesses them that it may be taken as sheer heartlessness for anyone to indulge in theorising about them. The theologies which offer glib solutions seem blasphemies. But the sense of exaltation which great tragedy produces (and which is among the highest human manifestations of *ananda*) provides an answer to the problem in the manner of experience, not explanation. "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods, they kill us for their sport" is a statement at Lear's level of agony. "On such sacrifices the gods themselves throw incense" is a statement at the *King Lear* level, the level of Shakespeare's imagination. The "tenth-man-fallacy" is frequently mentioned in our books of scriptural exegetics and there is no more necessary and useful pill in the kit

of the spiritual traveller. We are constantly tempted to consider ourselves spectators and judges of the universe, standing, so to speak, outside it, leaving out of account the truth that we should always be reminding ourselves that we are the Universe. Said Sri Ramakrishna: "Evil is in the universe as poison in the cobra" - the poison is not poisonous to him who secretes it. To grow into oneness with it (to be 'oned' as in Verse 8) is spiritual life.

Bhagavan mentions the tenth-man-fallacy in verse 37 (counting the nine men and mourning the passing away of the tenth member of the band, who is in fact the mourner who has done the counting but forgotten to count himself), but the whole of the 'Forty Verses' is an exposure of this fallacy. The 'nine men' and the 'tenth' form only an illustration and one has to pass on to the truth, for the illustration has necessarily to stop short of the truth. This truth is that the tenth man emerges out of the nine, having been successively the first man, the second, and so on, now being simultaneously all the ten! The *Taittiriya Upanishad*, which dwells on the expository method of the five sheaths, mentions each successive stage as being more satisfying, but never denies the previous ones. Not only is the Truth all the five sheaths but it is also the power which passes on from one sheath to another. It is indeed the upward urge on which the five sheaths have been strung, like pearls on a thread. The upward urge, the *tapas*, that will give us no rest at any level, but will push us beyond the five and make us recognise itself as the Highest is Brahman. The *anandamaya kosa* is only the irradiated mist that swathes the peak of the hill. At the foot of the hill, it was the blanketing fog, darkness visible. At the top it is thinnest and appears as visible light. The nature of light is, in itself, to be invisible; the nature of mist is to obscure. The *anandamaya kosa* is the mist, the bright cloud, impregnated by the glory of the light that it has received into its bosom. Beyond this *kosa* is the invisible light. The proof of this? To touch the Reality, all that is needed is to project further the line that has followed its own straight 'compulsive course' so far. That which was insentient, then mere animal instinct, the vital urge, mechanical mentation, the self-regulative intelligence, intuition, inspiration and mysticism cannot be alien to us. "It is not the known, nor yet the unknown". The five sheaths have all of them to be transcended (Verse 5); the ultimate is beyond the *jnana* and the *ajnana*, the knowledge and the ignorance, of our intelligence. Faith is not uncritical credulity. It is to go further with one who has led us safely so very far, ourselves having suspiciously watched him all along.

Bhagavan and the Buddha are prophets for those who seek through pure intuitive understanding. Explaining the universe, its creation and dissolution, treating the relationships of a postulated 'soul' to a postulated 'God' is not their business. They begin with human awareness and lead up to pure Awareness.

That is the beginning and the end. The Buddha's eightfold path begins with 'right understanding' and culminates in 'right Awareness'. Bhagavan begins with our 'knowledge' that we are and ends with the Being that is Awareness. The individual entity finds itself, alas, involved in the whirling wheel of *samsara*. It can find its rest, not by moving out of the wheel, but only by moving to its centre; but it does not know this yet. Bhagavan sees *samsara* as the whole clutter of man's clumsy mental apparatuses with which he hopes to 'know' the wheel and even perhaps, to escape from it. The Buddha sees *samsara* as staying involved in a life of *dukkha* (suffering) constantly under the threat of disease, decrepitude and death, which only exemplify this *dukkha*. Both descriptions are fundamentally the same.

The *Upanishad* gives the answer to the question 11 what is *dukkha* (suffering)? By defining its antonym, *sukha* (bliss); "The Vast is bliss." It follows that the restricted is misery. Alas, it is not the privations of life that constitute misery for the illumined ones, but the nature of our satisfactions in life. It is our *jnana*, our petty, restricted 'knowledge' that Bhagavan would have us escape from. Is it not curious that Bhagavan never

mentions rebirth in the whole of the Forty Verses? We keep on solemnly busying ourselves with the whole caboodle of the mind, rushing about inside the cocoon of our own weaving. Bhagavan asks us to wing our way out of it. For the Buddha it is pathetic that we live involved in alternations of satisfaction and desire, both what come to us and what we go on inducing in ourselves, only to end in the final frustration of old age and death. The life of most of us is a see-saw between aperitifs and emetics. It grieves the seers to see us, their fellow beings, as doddering imbeciles or as maudlin addicts. This is their 'compassion', as they appeal to us to be ourselves.

The Dark Night

By A. Rao

In the soul's dark night
I knew the taste of tears unshed,
The hopeless seeming fight,
Pain for my daily bread.

The hammer blows of God
Sculptured from the living flesh,
As from a lifeless clod,
The new man made a fresh.

The only one escape
Was such my mind could not come by,
Could not even shape -
To curse God and die.

Yet through it all I knew
The mind flagellant and a fake,
Clinging to the untrue.
Self-tortured for desire's sake.

The fake, the evil ghost, the impostor me,
The camel straining at the needle's eye,
Craving and he who craves, must cease to be -
Simply give up and, be content to die.
Since there's no other way, better cut quick,
Slay and have done, than make an endless tale,
Flogging then coddling, caring for when sick.
Then sentencing to hunger when he's hale.

Ruthless Compassion! Most compassionate
When most unmoved by anguish of the cry
Of that false self who stands within the gate
That shutters out the radiance of the sky.

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

II

By P. V. Sastri

Which is the greater miracle, to change, the date on a tombstone or to change a man's heart?

In May 1945 my eldest son, who was 23 years old, married, devout and a very promising young man, passed away. The event was so terrible and caused such grief that it was thought I would not survive it. I neglected practically all my worldly duties for some time. Later I was somehow attracted to Sri Ramanasramam and went there with the whole of my family. Ordinarily people, under such circumstances, would go to obtain peace and get rid of their sorrow. But that was not the idea of myself and my wife. Having read about Sri Krishna's bringing Sandipani's son back to life, we were so mad as to think of getting our son restored to life by the grace of Bhagavan Sri Ramana. We were prepared to sacrifice our all for that.

We left for Tiruvannamalai and, reaching the Ashram at 11 a.m. entered the hall where Bhagavan used to sit. Our one idea was to beseech him to bring our son back to life; but despite our intense desire we found that we could not open our mouths to speak. We simply sat silent till Bhagavan rose for dinner and everyone went out. Then we too went back to where we lodged. We went again in the afternoon, when devotees assembled in the hall, with the same purpose but with the same result. In that way eight days passed. Each morning and afternoon we wanted to implore Bhagavan to bring our son back to life but we could not utter a word in his presence. On the eighth evening we talked it over together on coming out of the hall and decided that it was no use staying any longer since our purpose had not been fulfilled. So we decided to leave next morning.

At that moment a gentleman of the name of Subbarao met us. He was formerly a pleader, I think at Nellore, and had come to Tiruvannamalai and settled down as one of the resident devotees. We had made friends, perhaps because I also am a pleader. He asked me what we were talking about, so I told him our whole story. I admitted that we felt peace in Bhagavan's presence, but the moment we left the hall our grief burst out again like a volcanic eruption; and yet, we were unable to speak out and put our desire before Bhagavan.

Mr. Subbarao promised to take us to Sri Bhagavan next day and introduce us to him. We agreed and next day, on being introduced, told Bhagavan about our grief and in a general way asked for his help. Sri Bhagavan nodded, his head and said "*Seri, Seri*" (All right, All right). But we still found ourselves unable to talk any more, still less to tell him what it was that we really wanted. Again we felt constrained to sit there speechless. That evening we decided to leave, since even the intervention of Mr. Subbarao had not helped us. But Ramana would not let us go. The thought occurred to me that I should buy some books published by the Ashram, so I went to the bookstall. The gentleman in charge was in meditation, but he opened his eyes immediately and asked us to come in. On being questioned by him I repeated our whole story. He said that the Maharshi was capable of bringing the boy back to life, but since the boy was a highly religious and really devout young man he would have gone to better regions and would not like to come back to us. I assured him that he loved us so much and we loved him so much that he would really come back if it were possible. The gentleman then put me another question. Suppose Bhagavan

brings him back to you and then both of you die, what will the position be then? This question dispelled the thick cloud of illusion that had enveloped us and at last we saw that our attempt to get our son back was sheer madness. I felt at the time and still feel now that it was not the bookseller that was talking to me like that but really Bhagavan speaking through him.

We abandoned the hope of getting our son back to life and also our plan of leaving immediately. We stayed for about twelve more days, until our monetary resources were exhausted. The rest of our stay at the Ashram was only for the purpose of obtaining peace. Sri Ramana's "all right" had been meant to help us in the only way in which a realized Guru will help. His grace was bestowed on us and he began to work silently in our hearts to remove the thick clouds of sorrow and end the volcanic outbursts of grief. He began to instil peace and develop real knowledge in us. Silently and slowly the grace is still working in that direction. What we wanted to have we were actually prevented from asking for. We were also not allowed to go away in a mood of despair. We were blessed with his grace and uplifted in the right way.

Because this is an experience of an extraordinary type I feel that it is appropriate to make it known to all the devotees of Bhagavan.

III

By D.

I first learnt of Sri Ramana Maharshi when I came across the book 'A Search in Secret India' by Paul Brunton in 1943 or 1944. It made a tremendous impression on me and I must have read it three or four times; but somehow it did not occur to me that I could go to Tiruvannamalai and meet Bhagavan in actual flesh and blood. Apparently I was not destined to; maybe because I was not mature enough. Next I remember hearing about his *Mahasamadhi* (leaving the body) in April 1950 when it was broadcast all over India. I felt very very sorry that I had missed having his *darshan*.

One day in 1961 1 happened to visit a friend who had a very pious and devout lady staying with him. There was a small gathering there,of people who had come to hear her talk on the spiritual life. I also stayed to listen. The words that stuck in my mind were: "Don't delay any longer. The time to begin your *sadhana* is here and now. It will be too late when you get old; either you will not have the energy or ill health will prevent it. Don't put it off on the excuse that you are still working professionally or in business or that you still have to arrange your daughters' marriages and get your sons fixed up in life before you can attend to anything else."

I returned home in a very thoughtful mood. *Sadhana* meant for me Bhagavan. Fortunately I had one or two books about him and his teaching written by some of his old and devoted followers. I read and reread them, and was completely overcome. The direct method of Self-enquiry as explained in them simply captivated me and would not leave me. I got all the books I could and went through them; and then the idea of visiting Sri Ramanasramam arose in me. An article that appeared in a weekly paper about the continued spiritual life there converted the idea into a firm decision. I arrived there for the first time at the end of 1961, just after Bhagavan's *Jayanti* (birth anniversary).

Although it is said that Bhagavan's teachings are crystal clear and do not require any explanations, I would nevertheless submit that

for a new *sadhaka* (aspirant), especially a dunce like me, and one who has not sat at his lotus feet, books written by his old disciples are a great help in understanding his terse and incisive writings and sayings at least in the early stages.

Sri Ramanasramam today has a very calm and peaceful atmosphere and yet vibrant with power. I have found it more conducive to meditation than any other place I know. The presence of Bhagavan is felt everywhere and more strongly than I can say. In fact I can fully endorse the poem by S. P. Mukherjee in the first issue of 'The Mountain Path' and should like to quote it here as saying what I want to say.

A BEACON STILL

We have not seen you, Bhagavan;
We have not approached your lotus-feet
Yet do we find
The now and the then are the same for us,
The body-presence, the presence in the heart,
These are the same.
One thing only do we know -
Ramanashram is a beacon still.[1]

I was delighted to find that one is at perfect liberty to do what one likes there and not do what one does not like. No compulsory ritual or discipline. There are certain rituals and *pujas*, but you are at liberty to attend them or not, as you please. In fact you are left alone to follow your own path. That does not mean that no one is helpful. On the contrary, I found that the inmates and devotees are always willing to help when help is needed; only they do not interfere when interference is not needed.

There is a mysterious power that draws you to the Ashram again and again. It is like a magnet. Each year now I come back for as much time as my work will allow.

1 This is the correct form. The 'That' which crept in at the beginning of the last line in our January issue was unauthorised. (Editor).

SATORI

By F. 0.

Some years after Bhagavan left the body his Jayanti (birth anniversary) was being celebrated on a roof terrace in Calcutta in the cool of the evening. Among the devotees present was a teenage girl on whose face, as she sat in meditation, an expression of radiant serenity was seen. Later she put her experience in words, so far as is possible. The following is what she wrote.

I am not the mind nor the body - found myself in the heart; that me that lives after death. There was breathtaking joy in the feeling 'I am', the greatest possible earthly joy, the full enjoyment of existence. No way to describe it - the difference between this joy and complete happiness of the mind is greater than between the blackest misery and the fullest elation of the mind. Gradually - rapidly - my body seemed to be expanding from the heart. It engulfed the whole universe. It didn't feel any more. The only real thing was God (Bhagavan, Arunachala). I couldn't identify myself as any speck in that vastness - nor other people - there was only God, nothing but God. The word 'I' had no meaning any more; it meant the whole universe - everything is God, the only Reality.

THE MYTHOLOGY OF ARUNACHALA

By T. K. S.

A venerable Brahmin, steeped in ancient lore, one of the senior-most of the Maharshi's devotees, tells these stories of the symbolism and mythology of Arunachala. It will be seen that apparently fantastic stories have a precise symbolical meaning,

Sri Arunagiri Yogi[1] ever shines as the Supreme Lord with the three lines of sacred ash and the *tilak* spot on his brow, a lustrous garland about his neck, the king of serpents twined round his head and the crescent moon on his head, all signs of supremacy.

We shall relate how the Self-effulgent Siva, Arunadri[2], appeared on earth and how the story was told by Siva Himself to Gnana Sambanda, the great Tamil poet-saint.

Singing the praise of Arunachala, the One Being, accompanied by Unnamulai[3], her of the unsullied breast, called also Uma, Gnana Sambanda, the child Saint, beheld a venerable old Brahmin gathering flowers by the roadside. Gnana Sambanda asked him courteously where he had come from and what he was doing there.

The old Brahmin, who was none other than Arunachala Siva Himself, replied: "I come from Arunachala. That is my home. I come to gather flowers to be used in the worship of the Lord."

Gnana Sambanda thereupon asked how far away it was and in what direction. The old Brahmin replied: "It cannot be far away since, old, as I am, I come here every day to gather flowers for worship there. I will put you on a good path to arrive there."

In this we see the allegory of the Guru, the manifestation of the Self, showing the path to the aspirant and declaring that the Goal is "not far away".

Gnana Sambanda asked for further information about Arunagiri[2] and was told the following stories.

1 A Personification of Arunachala.

2 A name for Arunachala

3 Siva's Spouse or Shakti.

II

The Column of Fire

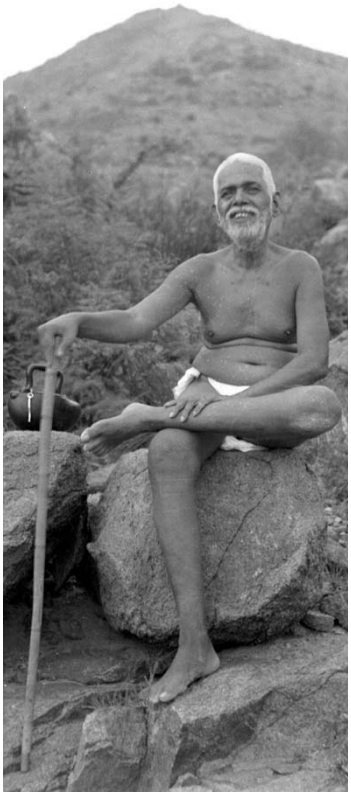
Arunachala is the essential basis of all this universe. He is a manifestation of Sambhu[4] who in ancient times appeared as a column of fire to settle a dispute that had arisen between four-faced Brahma and Vishnu of the four arms.

Both of them were manifested forth from Sadasiva[4], whose will it was to appear as many.[5] In both the ego-sense arose, each deeming himself greater than the other, and the struggle between them raged until the universe was in

4 A name for Siva

danger of destruction from it. Then Lord Chandrasekara[6] decided that He should assert His supremacy for the salvation of the universe. He thereupon appeared as a vast column of fire between the two struggling gods.

The two gods were perplexed at seeing this column of fire transcending the ends of the universe.



They agreed that whichever of them could discover either end of it was the greater. Vishnu took the form of the boar Varaha and began digging down through the nether worlds. Brahma took the form of a swan and soared upwards to find the summit. Even though Vishnu descended to the fourth lower world he could not find the end but returned acknowledging defeat. Brahma also failed to reach the summit, but in flight he caught a flower falling from paradise and, taking it back with him, claimed to have reached the summit and found it there.

In this myth Siva, the Destroyer, is the Self or Enlightenment, destroyer of the illusion of a separate individual being; Vishnu, the Preserver, is the ego-sense, preserver of the apparent individual being, stringing all its moments together into an apparent entity. He delves down into himself, seeking in vain for the truth of Being. Brahma, the Creator, is the mind which falsely assumes the creative function, soars aloft into ideas and theories, even receives an intuition fallen from paradise and claims wrongly that it is Enlightenment.

Appearing before them, the Supreme Lord blessed Vishnu for his truth and devotion, but Brahma he cursed, saying that for this offence no temples should be dedicated to him. And indeed, to this day temples are raised to Siva and Vishnu but not to Brahma. At that time Brahma had a fifth head rising above the four faces with which he is now depicted, but Siva in his anger struck it off.

The fifth head of Brahma is the quintessence beyond the four elements, the centre above the directions of space, the pure knowledge above the earthly knowledge of mind and senses. It is equivalent to the third eye of Siva, the unitary knowledge beyond duality. Its being struck off is equivalent to the 'fall of man' in the Christian tradition: man or mind being deprived of the direct intuition of paradise and reduced to the world of opposites, the world of good and evil and the strife between them.

Then, it is said, Vishnu intervened with a prayer to the Lord, reminding Him that, Brahma is the Lord of the four Vedas, to which his four faces correspond, and that the Vedas are not mere meaning but the primal basic sound by which the universe is created and held in being, and if the Lord of the Vedas was destroyed the universe would crumble into ruin. To this Sambhu[4] replied that Brahma was still the Lord of the Vedas and that whatever place the Vedas were chanted would

5 This recalls the *hadith* by which the creation of the universe is explained in Islam: "I was a hidden treasure and longed to be known," (Editor)
6 Lord of the Crescent Moon, a name for Siva.

be his temple. And so it has been and is.

Then the two gods prayed to Sankara[4] to withdraw His effulgence and let the column of fire assume the appearance of an inert hill that the world might be blessed and not destroyed by it. Graciously hearing their prayers, the Lord withdrew the effulgence into himself and remained in the form of a hill with the name of ARUNACHALA, that those who come to it or even turn to it in their heart may be blessed in this life and ultimately attain Liberation. Every year at the festival of Kartikai[7] a beacon of *ghee* donated by devotees is lighted on the summit of Arunachala in reminder of its real nature as a column of fire.

III

Uma's Tapas

In my article entitled 'The Secrets of Arunachala'[8] I told how Uma, the Spouse of Siva, known also as Gowri and as Parvati, playfully closed the eyes of the Lord with her hands and thereby brought about the dissolution of the universe, which exists only in the sight of Siva. I indicated also the symbolism of this myth.

Sambhu[4] remained unaffected. It is the same to him whether there is *kalpa* or *pralaya*, manifestation or dissolution. Uma, however, His *Shakti* or 'Energy' had to do penance in order to be reunited with the Lord. For this purpose she went to Kanchipuram where, taking up her abode beneath a never-aging mango-tree beside the Kampa tank, she performed all the prescribed duties and penance. She made a Siva-*lingam* of clay, consecrated it and worshipped it with great fervour. To test her constancy Siva set the Kampa river in flood; but the goddess thought only of saving the *lingam*, which she clasped to her bosom, so that the form of her body was imprinted on the wet clay.

Then the voice of the Lord was heard:

"Let this *lingam* remain sacred in the world, perpetuating the imprint of *Shakti* upon Siva. I Myself am manifested in the world as Arunachala, the boon-conferring *Lingam* of Light. Go there and do penance at the Ashram of Rishi Gautama[9], under his guidance, and there I will reveal My radiant form to you."

Here Uma is the great prowess of Siva, inseparable from Him sent forth into manifestation in order to find her way back to union with the Lord who is her Beloved and the very Self of her.

Gautama Ashram

First she does penance under the ageless tree of revealed *dharma*, fulfilling all the obligations of the law. Then, by making and worshipping the *lingam* of clay, she adds devotion to duty. When the river of fate floods she clings only to the *lingam*, showing that devotion is her sole treasure. Only then is she directed to the Hill of Enlightenment where her Guru awaits her.

7 Falling at full moon in October or November by the Western calendar.

8 In our issue of April 1964. (Editor).

9 Another Gautama, not the Buddha.

IV

Rishi Gautama

Receiving the Devi at his Ashram, Rishi Gautama bowed down to her and said: "I perceive that you are here at the behest of Lord Siva. Arunachala is His most sacred place. Here the Lord revealed Himself to Brahma and Vishnu and assumed the form of the Hill that is called Arunagiri."[2]

The attitude of the Guru to his disciple is indeed one of reverence, since he sees in him the beloved of the Lord. When our Bhagavan was asked once about people prostrating before him he said "Before they bow down to me I have already bowed down in my heart to the Siva in them."

Gautama then gave Uma instruction in the form of stories about Arunachala. He told her how Brahma once created a beautiful maiden to distract the yogis from their penance, but so enchanting was she that Brahma himself fell in love with her and pursued her. She changed into a deer to escape him and he gave chase as a stag. Then she changed into a bird and he into the male bird. As a bird she flew here and cried out: "Arunachala, I submit to Thee!" Immediately a hunter emerged from the hill to protect her. Brahma was freed from the illusion of desire and prayed for forgiveness. Siva said: "You are cleansed of your sins by the mere sight of Arunachala. I am the effulgence of Arunagiri[2], the Supreme Whole. Go round Arunachala silently a hundred times and you will be purified." Brahma did so and became Lord of the paradise of *Satyaloka*.

The beauty of *Maya* is such that Being itself becomes enamoured of it. The allure of the mind's fabrications is such that the mind itself pursues them. Only on receiving an intuition of the Self is it freed from the snare of delusion. Then it is bidden to revolve constantly around the Heart in silence, that is in stillness of mind.

The next story Gautama told concerns Vishnu. Hari[10] is the substratum of the universe. At the beginning of each *kalpa*[11] Brahma issues forth from him to perform the task of creation. Once, however, Hari slept untimely and Siva had to undertake the work for him.

Just as the universe goes through alternate phases of manifestation and dissolution, so does the *sadhaka* through phases of expansion and contraction. He may, however, fall into a state of *laya* or yogic sleep, pleasant but infructuous, and cease from inner strife. He must shake himself out of this and turn to Arunachala, to the heart, for renewed guidance.

On waking, Hari said: "This is the work of *Maya*. What shall I do to expunge this sin? I shall take refuge at the feet of Sankara."[4] At this very thought, Sambhu stood before him and said: "I am Arunachala, by merely looking at which darkness is destroyed. Though outwardly a hill of earth and stone, I am fire inwardly. The rains that are absorbed in Arunachala do not flow out. Anything sought there is obtained. Worship Arunachala and take up your work again."

The rain of Grace that falls upon the heart does not flow forth in waste but remains there to fertilise it.

In *Satya-yuga* Arunachala was visible fire (the radiance of Truth naked and visible); in the second age it was a mound of gems (the inexhaustible treasures of spiritual powers and experiences were apparent to all); in the third it was of gold and now, in this *kali-yuga*, it is a hill of earth and stone, its radiance concealed.

At all times, but especially on auspicious occasion such as *Sivaratri* (the Night of Siva) and *Kartikai*, when a beacon is lit on the summit, Gods and invisible *Rishis* go round Arunachala, blessing the humans who go round and fulfilling their wishes. There is no spot more sacred. Mount Kailas is the abode of Siva but Arunachala is Siva Himself.

All this Rishi Gautama explained to Parvati[12], whereupon she decided to do penance here and requested him to give her a hut to live in, which he gladly did. Though seemingly young, her devotion

10 A name for Vishnu.

11 Cycle of manifestation,

12 A name for Uma.

and detachment were great. Her frail body shone like a golden creeper, full of lustre.

V

Mahishasura

After spending some time at the Ashram of Rishi Gautama, Uma established herself in a *tapovanam*, a place of austerities, at Pavalakunru on a spur of Arunachala. She put aside her jewellery, let her hair grow unkempt and matted, clad herself in the bark of a tree and smeared her body with sacred ash. She now lived a life of severe *tapas*.

At this time the demon Mahishasura created such havoc that not only was the whole earth disturbed but the heavens also. Fearing for their safety, the Devas appealed to Uma for protection. The demon attacked her *tapovanam* and fierce battle raged between his forces and her attendants. The latter were driven back, and finally Uma herself assumed her terrible form as Durga, her of the sixteen arms, and sallied forth against him, a weapon in every hand. Long and fierce was the battle between them, but in the end Durga overthrew the *asura*, trod him underfoot and pierced him with her trident. Then she cut off his head and danced in triumph on it. The Devas rained flowers upon her and sang her praises. There was divine music in the heavens. All the directions of space were brightened.

Finally, as this myth indicates, the ego of the *sadhaka* rises up in revolt and must be destroyed. Until this is done the higher, heavenly faculties are disturbed as well as the purely human, the gods as well as men. There is disturbance everywhere and danger of total ruin. But the demon can be destroyed only by the *sadhaka* himself. Neither God nor Guru can do it for him. When he achieves victory there is rejoicing in heaven and earth.

In the neck of the slain *asura* Durga beheld a *Siva-lingam*. She touched it and it adhered to her hand and would not come off. This made her fear that the demon had been a *Siva-bhakta*, a devotee of the Lord, and that she had committed a sin in slaying him. Rishi Gautama reassured her but she was not convinced. Then came the voice of Siva instructing her how to make ablution in the sacred waters, and after due ablution the *lingam* came

Pavalakunru

away. It was consecrated and worshipped on earth under the name of *papanasa lingam*, the 'sin-destroying *lingam*,' and the sacred waters as '*khadga tirtha*.'

VI

The Consummation

Surrounded with the fires of *tapas* on all four sides and with her eyes raised towards the sun, Ambika[12], the Divine Mother, shone like a jewel. At sunset on the evening of *Kartikai* the full moon rose above the horizon to gaze upon her splendour. A radiant light burst forth on the crest of Sonagiri[2]. Vishnu and Brahma appeared. Uma slowly walked around Arunachala, singing praises to the Lord. Suddenly He stood motionless before her, glorious in His own radiance. She stood with downcast eyes before Him.

"Oh Devi!", He said, "Why should you suffer? Are you not One with Me and worshipful in all the worlds? Are we not One, like the moon and its rays? Are we not united beyond time and space? I am Narayana[10] and you are Lakshmi[13]. I am Brahma and you Saraswati[14]. I am the Ocean and you the Ganges. I am *ahankara*[15] and you the intellect. I am *Purusha*[16] and you are *Prakriti*[17]. You are that *Shakti* which brings about creation, preservation and destruction. Imagining yourself to have a separate existence from me has brought all this suffering upon you. Awake now from this delusion."

So saying, Lord Parameswara[18] lifted her up and she was absorbed into his being. Merging, they became one androgynous whole, the right side red and the left white, the right side male and the left female. Thus was the Mystic Union achieved as human and Divine became one whole. Thenceforth was she Unnamulai[12] and He Annamalai[2]. Here at the place of their union, at this Arunachala, Grace is abundant and *sadhakas* are blessed in their efforts. This is the heart-centre this is the Holy Hill.

13 Vishnu's Spouse or Shakti.
14 Brahma's Spouse or Shakti.
15 The I-sense.
16 The Spirit.
17 Universal, Primordial Substance.
18 The Supreme God.

STILLNESS

By N. R. Krishnamurti

In stillness the mind-body-world complex dissolves. The ego has to be created, maintained and then dissolved. And yet there is no ego to be dissolved. It does not exist. Neither do its shadows — mind, body, world. This is the ultimate truth revealed by the enquiry 'Who am I?' Who would kick a shadow? It is said that the light and heat of *Atma* playing on the desert of *Maya* generates the mirage of the mind-body-world complex.

Who is it that asks 'Who am I?' Ask this and the ego is nowhere at all. All that is is pure Being-Awareness-Bliss —— I AM ——I AM — without beginning or end; and this forever IS this Arunachala-Ramana-Siva-Santham, the One without a second. Thought is no more, even enquiry has exhausted itself and one is still and abides as one is, the core of existence, the Heart.

Om Tat Sat.

THE HERITAGE OF SRI MAHARSHI

By Mouni Sadhu

Mouni Sadhu is well known to many of our readers through his book 'In Days of Great Peace' (Allen & Unwin) in which he describes his stay at Tiruvannamalai during the lifetime of the Maharshi and the enormous influence that the Maharshi had on him.

More than sixty years ago, Swami Vivekananda expressed a far-reaching truth: "A good thought, even when generated in a secluded cave, will invariably have its repercussion throughout the whole world." In other words, spiritual energy like its junior sister material energy, does not go astray or perish.

At that time, the penetration of Eastern, especially Vedantic, philosophy into the Western world was only just starting. Vivekananda, with his world-wide travelling and lecturing about Yoga, was one of its ablest exponents in his own day.

Almost at the same time, in the silent caves of the holy mountain of Arunachala, a young ascetic - Venkataraman, the future Great Rishi of India, whom we know as Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, started, his spiritual work for humanity.

The potent current of meditation born from his state of true *Samadhi*, has since enveloped our globe. If a single thought leaves its impression on the mental aura of a planet, we can hardly imagine the actual results of a constant stream of spiritual energy such as that which for more than fifty years radiated from Sri Maharshi.

In the early part of this century the central Vedantic teaching of Self-Realization as a goal of man's attainment was little known in the West, although it had continued in an unbroken stream in India as well as through the Sufi saints of Islamic countries and the Buddhist Masters of various schools. It was Sri Maharshi who made it known throughout the world in the form of the quest for the Self.

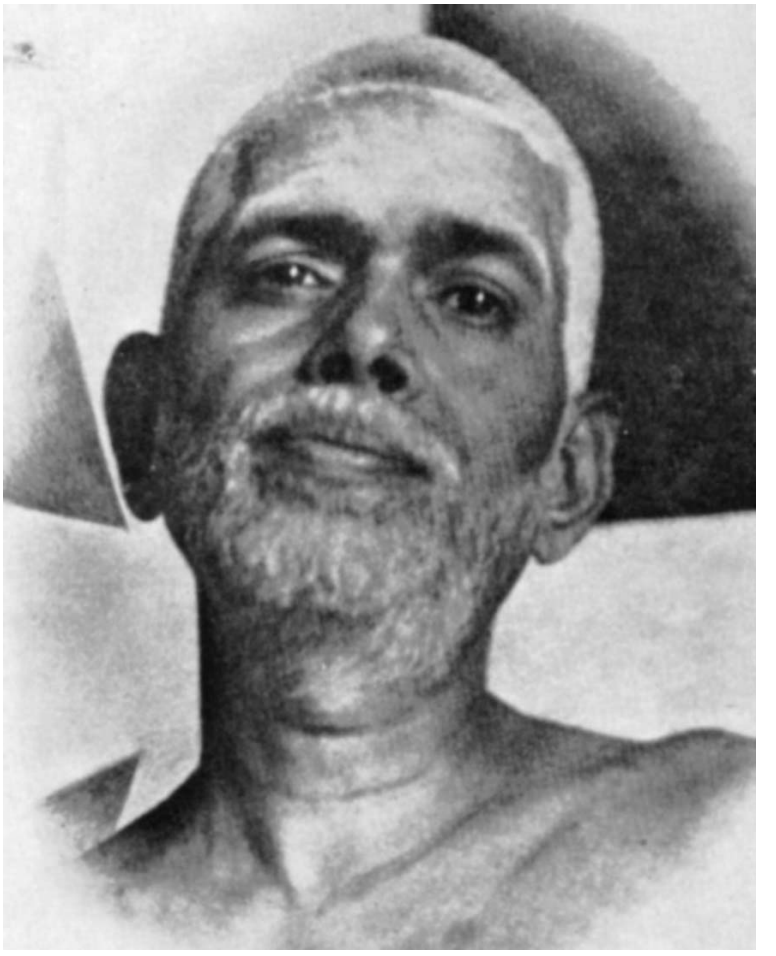
Acting for our present epoch as a supreme messenger of Truth, Sri Maharshi gave new life to the ancient teaching, and by his own example showed to us that Realization is possible here and now.

Books giving the Master's teachings and commenting upon them, are now spreading over the world. Little wonder then, that those who are ripe for it and whose destiny draws them to the quest of Realization, respond and accept the teaching given for this epoch. Thus they gradually become able to perceive the inner Light, the 'inner Guru' spoken of by the Maharshi.

Very striking is another phenomenon: in letters from all parts of the world, I can see that people have found the teachings of the Great Rishi and the idea of using the *Vichara* to be something they already knew in their own depths. They often say that, after reading a few pages, development and understanding flow as if through a riverbed prepared long ago. And they find that the teaching belongs to them. Truth is not discovered but recognised.

There are also those who have not yet encountered any of the Maharshi's teachings or read anything about him, and yet of themselves seek to penetrate into their own mysterious inner realm, in which to find the final enlightenment. They seek their Self. We know that there is no such thing as a result without a cause. A potent Cause must be behind the new trend in man's eternal Search. To me it is utterly clear: it is the spiritual inheritance from one of the perfected, from a life manifesting Truth, a life which some of us were privileged to witness with our mortal eyes.

The "I-current", to which the Maharshi's teaching turns us, works beyond the veil of religion. It reaches men of different denominations and



speaks equally well to the Rishi's own countrymen, to Christians, Buddhists, Muslims and others.

Here we see another characteristic of the Master's inheritance: Sri Maharshi neither created nor propagated any new religion or philosophy. He did much more, giving us the key with which to open the hidden treasure of all true religions, to understand and then to practise them with inner enlightenment, and not with gloomy indecision, doubt and lack of faith as some may have done before.

The Master ever abides with us in his spiritual energy, permeating this world of relativity, as he told us before he left his body.

The immense spiritual accumulator he charged during his visit to our planet as a living man, assists and inspires seekers who are ripe enough to realize his teaching and message.

That method by which a man makes spiritual progress is the best for him. He should not change it for another which may not seem right to him or please him or be useful to him.

- Yoga Vasishta.

THE LESSER AND GREATER JIHAD

By Abdullah Qutbuddin

"Believers! Make war on the infidels who dwell around you and be severe with them. Know that Allah is with the vigilant."[1] War is under no stigma in Islam. Indeed, it is enjoined in the Qur'an in a number of places. Nor is it necessarily defensive. The small Muslim community of Medina was naturally on the defensive at first, but after overcoming the Meccan idolaters, the Muslims, still in the lifetime of Mohammad and in obedience to him, proceeded to subjugate the rest of Arabia and to equip an expedition for the invasion of Syria. Indeed, fighting was an obligation and those who shrank from it were rebuked as sternly as Arjuna was by Krishna: "If you do not go to battle He will punish you severely and will replace you by others."[2] Those who died in battle acquired the proud title of *shaheed*. This is translated as 'martyr', but it is from the same root as *shahada*, the 'testimony' or 'witness' that there is no god but God and that Mohammad is his Prophet. It implies that they died as witnesses to the truth of Islam and earned paradise by so doing.

This militancy can be explained in terms of the distinction that Arthur Osborne has shrewdly pointed out in his *Buddhism and Christianity in the Light of Hinduism*[3] between a world-renouncing and a world-sanctifying religion. Since Christians were enjoined to renounce the world and render unto Caesar the things that were Caesar's, they could live as well in a pagan as a Christian country. Indeed, the persecution or at least discrimination that they were likely to suffer would serve to keep their faith screwed up to pitch and weed out the smug, the worldly and the weaklings. Islam, on the other hand, was not only a faith but a way of life with its code of civil and criminal law and its injunctions governing trade, marriage, inheritance, etc. Muslims were not enjoined to renounce the world but to mould it to a harmonious and divinely sanctioned pattern of life. And this could only be done if they were the rulers.

This does not mean that no other religion was to be tolerated. There is a cryptic saying in the Qur'an: "No compulsion in religion" - cryptic because it can be taken as a statement to mean that compulsion is impossible in matters of faith or as an injunction to mean that no compulsion is to be used. The latter seems the more plausible reading. Other monotheists, such as Jews and Christians, termed 'People of the Book' since they also had a revealed scripture, were not to be exterminated, or forcibly converted, but after conquest, to be taxed and protected. "Out of those who have been given a Book, make war on such as do not believe in Allah and the last day and forbid what Allah and His Prophet have forbidden and follow the religion of truth, (and do so) until they are subjugated and pay taxes and recognise your supremacy."[4] Muslims did not always keep to this. For instance, on the conquest of Persia Zoroastrianism was practically extirpated, although a monotheistic religion, surviving only among those few of its followers who escaped to the hospitable shores of India to found the Parsi community. But then, in what religion have men lived up to their scriptures? And what rulers of subject peoples have resisted the intoxicating presumption of superiority?

For idolatry toleration was not obligatory, since Mohammad himself set the example of smashing the idols at Mecca and banning their worship. Perhaps that accounts for the savage persecution that so many Muslim rulers indulged in India. Sufis may have perceived the beauty and profundity behind the idol-worship, a Kabir or a Nanak may have proclaimed that one could call alike on Ram

1 Qur'an, IX, 123.
2 Qur'an, IX, 39.
3Published by Rider & Co., London.

4 Qur'an, IX, 29. 1

or Rahim, even a Mogul prince like Dara Shikoh may have welcomed 'The Meeting of the Two Seas ' - and been put to death for it by his fanatical brother Aurangzebe; but in general Muslim ruling classes lacked the will to understand.

Islam, then, does not condemn war; but does any religion? Christ declared that he was come to bring not peace but a sword and that even members of the same family would take up arms against each other for his sake. And so it has been. His prediction has been simply fulfilled. In the *Bhagavad Gita* Arjuna falls into a pacifist mood and is convinced by Krishna that he should do his duty as a Kshatriya by fighting.

What then of the *ahimsa* that Gandhi proclaimed and that is so widely honoured, at least in theory, today? In ancient India *ahimsa*, non-violence, was an obligation upon the *sadhu*, the world-renouncer. Having renounced worldly ends, he naturally had to renounce worldly means also. But it was never expected that a ruler should abjure warfare and none of the scriptures enjoin *ahimsa* as a general obligation; it would be a denial of the very conception of a Kshatriya caste to do so. Whether Gandhi himself meant *ahimsa* to imply renunciation of war by sovereign states is hard to say, because the one statement he held to quite consistently was the statement of his own inconsistency. Certain it is that he encouraged Indians to join the British army in the first world war and that at the very end of his life he did nothing to dissuade the government of independent India from sending troops to defend Kashmir.

War is a horrible thing and always has been, but the feeling of revulsion against it is quite recent. In fact it dates from the time when total nuclear destruction became a danger to be reckoned with. Fear of such destruction is sensible and well grounded and efforts should certainly be made to prevent at least major wars from breaking out; but these efforts should be recognised for what they are - the outcome of fear - and not dressed up in idealistic phraseology to make it appear that man has suddenly become better than he ever was before: because that is hypocrisy. One thing is definite in Gandhi's teaching; that is that he distinguished between *ahimsa* based on idealism and non-violence based on fear and hated to see the latter parading as the former.

Although war is horrible in itself, it has an important symbolism. There is an inner as well as an outer war. It is recorded that when Mohammad returned to Medina with his followers after one of their battles he said: "Now we have come back from the lesser *jihad* to the greater" - from the war against outer enemies to each man's war against the enemies within himself. Islam is by no means alone in stressing this symbolism: the *Bhagavad Gita* is interpreted by many commentators as implying the need for inner strife, while the Christian Church on earth is entitled the 'Church Militant'.

Outer pacifism is as admirable as war is horrible unless it means putting up with what the Hindus call *adharma* - disharmony, wrong, injustice - out of fear, for then it is craven. But in modern times there is an inner pacifism also, and this is wholly to be condemned. Among the ever growing groups and circles of people who understand that there is a higher reality, are many who hold that it is sufficient to understand mentally or to believe in the divine verities without making effort, without taking up arms against the forces of obstruction in oneself. Such people shirk what Mohammad called 'the greater holy war'. They are like the 'hypocrites' of whom the Qur'an speaks, who professed verbal sympathy with the striving Muslims but were not prepared to face danger or make any sacrifice in the cause. "The day will surely come when you will see the true believers, men and women, with their light shining before them and on their right hand and a voice singing to them: 'Rejoice this day. You shall enter gardens watered by running streams in which you shall abide forever.' That is the supreme achievement. On that day the hypocrites, both men and women, will say to the true believers: 'Wait for us so that we can borrow some of your light.' They will be answered:

'Go back and yourselves seek a light.' Then a wall with a gate in it shall be established between them, on the inside of which shall be mercy but on the outside punishment. They will call out: 'Were we not on your side?' But the answer will be: 'Yes, but you fell into temptation and wavered, you doubted and were deluded by your own desires till the Divine pronouncement came and the Dissembler deceived you about Allah. Today no ransom shall be accepted from you or from the unbelievers; the fire is your abode and protector: an evil end!'"[5]

The term for Realization in Islam is *Fana*, a word remarkably similar to *Nirvana* since its literal meaning is 'extinction'. it has a certain similarity to the Hindu *nirvikalpa samadhi*, meaning 'Realization in a state of trance'. To be perfected it must be followed by *Baqa* or 'stabilization', in which there is a full return to outer awareness simultaneously with inner Realization. This is the Hindu *sahaja samadhi*. It is the state which Western Zen writers love to refer to when, as they put it, "a tree is again a tree and a mountain a mountain."

The question which agitates seekers throughout the world today, in fact the only question of importance, is what should be done to attain Realization and what path or methods to follow. The 'inner pacifists', the 'hypocrites' as the Qur'an calls them, are those who hold that nothing need be done, no effort made, no enemy fought: "just carry on quietly and it will all come to you."

The error of this attitude can be exposed by putting the question from the opposite end: not 'what must be done to attain Realization?' but 'what prevents Realization?' The word *sahaja* means 'natural'; *sahaja samadhi*, therefore, is 'natural *samadhi*'. And the Maharshi never tired of reminding us that Realization is natural to us, that it is our natural state. Then what withholds us from it? The answer is fairly obvious: the ego with all its tangled roots. Can one imagine a state of permanent, natural Realization dawning on a person who is jealous lest some one else attain it before him, distracted by the thought of a beautiful woman, irritable when people disagree with him, hungry for adulation, concerned about the impression he makes? Obviously not. That means that before the ground can be cleared for Realization a whole jungle of tangled impulses and desires has to be cleared out, And how do the 'inner pacifists' propose to do that? Do they hold that it is a simple thing to do and requires no effort or technique? Spiritual Masters in all ages have warned that it is not and today psychiatrists confirm the warning. The patient won't get back to human normality without admitting the existence of complexities and need for effort; and the inner peace, the stillness, the calm expanse of mind that the spiritual aspirant must achieve in order to make the dawning of Realization possible goes far beyond anything the psychiatrist conceives of. How then can it be attained without effort?

It may be objected that the types of effort prescribed on a spiritual path are not in fact techniques for eliminating the egoistic impulses which obstruct Realization, that calling on the Name of God or being mindful of one's breathing or looking inwards to experience the reality of oneself cannot remove rancour or pride or other manifestations of egoism. But who is qualified to say that? The psychiatrist's technique also is not a direct head-on attack on complexes, and yet experts with learning and experience say that it works. And the spiritual techniques enjoined by the Masters are based on deeper learning and more profound experience going back for centuries; and many have found that they worked. Today also those who use them energetically under proper guidance as weapons in the greater holy war find them efficacious. It is the ' hypocrites', those who prefer not to fight, who complain that they would be ineffective anyway.

Soon after a person sets forth on the great enterprise it sometimes happens that an experience of overwhelming beauty comes to him, a perception of a truer, higher Reality. that he will

5 Qur'an, LVII, 12-15.

never be able to forget till the end of his life. This is an encouragement to persevere, a foretaste of what is to be achieved. It carries its own credentials and is beyond the possibility of doubt. It can be explained as the Grace of God or Guru on the young aspirant. Or it can be explained as the newly awakened aspiration momentarily tearing aside the veil of the ego which it is not yet powerful enough to destroy forever. It will not last, and the aspirant may be dejected, feeling that he has slipped back instead of making progress; however, its memory will hold him to the quest and draw him onwards until, perhaps after long striving, it begins to be accessible to him again.

But suppose he should sit down and say "It came to me spontaneously so I will wait for it to come again spontaneously. Why should I make any effort to retrieve it?" He will be remaining inactive with all the twisted complexities and hidden or open impurities inside him which render its stabilisation impossible. He will be like the 'hypocrites' of the Qur'an who sympathised verbally but would not fight. His fate will be the same.

THE FUTILITY OF ARGUMENT

Verses 196 to 803 of the Paramatthaka Sutta

Translated by Frank Allen

The person who is prejudiced in favour of one particular philosophical system is prejudiced against other systems. Such a person disputes and does not overcome the habit of disputing.

He seizes upon anything that seems 'good', that looks 'good', sounds 'good', on particular actions that appear to him to be ' good', upon anything he thinks is 'good' - and in so doing he labels other things 'bad'.

Experts are agreed that the man who labels things 'bad' is thereby making it impossible for himself to see them as they really are. Therefore the disciplined one should not colour what he sees and hears nor pin his faith on virtue and achievement.

He should not found or favour any organised system of philosophy either by word or deed. He should not consider himself 'better' or 'worse' than another, nor 'equal'.

Being without prejudices and favour, uninfluenced by convention, he does not associate himself with any formal religion or sect; he is not bound by any set rules.

For him there is no need to strive to become this or that, in this world or the next. And he has ceased to study the philosophies for he no longer requires the solace that philosophy offers.

As regards things seen and heard he remains unswayed by prejudice: such a Brahmin is not to be misled.

He accepts nothing, prefers nothing, takes to no particular philosophy. Not on account of his virtues and achievements does the (true) Brahmin fare to the Further Shore, never more to return

ZEN TRAINING IN JAPAN

By Marie B. Byles

In Journey into Burmese Silence[1] Miss Byles gives a delightful and attractive account of meditational practices in a Buddhist centre open to the laity in Burma. In the present article, which is to form part of a book under the title Paths to Inner Calm, she describes what she has seen and experienced at Zen meditation centres in Japan.

Miss Byles is also author of Footprints of Gautama the Buddha[2], a fictionalised biography and The Lotus and the Spinning Wheel, a book of reflections on the life and teachings of Buddha and Gandhi.

For two months I lived in a Zen temple in the Daitokuji compound on the outskirts of Kyoto, the chief centre of Buddhist learning in Japan. Every evening I meditated at the zendo or meditation hall established especially for Europeans and conducted on almost identical lines with that of the zendo of the monastery a few minutes away.

From the scenic flagged roadway the monastery looked like any other of the beautiful temples in Daitokuji, except for the pillars on either side of the gateway announcing it to be a centre for Zen training. There are two training periods, one from the beginning of May to the end of July and the other from the beginning of November to the end of January. At other times most of the monks go home.

Before the commencement of the summer training period, the roshi, or spiritual teacher, delivered an informal sermon which lay people might attend. About eight or nine lay people came; we sat on the tatami mats with seven monks dressed in dark blue cotton gowns in front of us. The smiling roshi entered dressed in dark brown with a small curved stick and a rosary over his wrist. He, too, sat on the floor. In front of him was a reading desk exactly the right height to hide his lips and he spoke in a very low voice. I should not think anyone heard and I was told that this sermon is generally regarded as an opportunity to make up for arrears of sleep. Two of the monks were availing themselves of this. From the end of March, monks in residence had been arising at 3 a.m. and meditating previously during a portion of the night.

To understand the nature of a Zen monastery today, it must be borne in mind that it resembles a theological training college rather than a Catholic monastery. Nearly all the young men who come, are there to be trained as temple priests. Perhaps they have inherited a temple. The monastery teaches both the art of meditation and of temple management.

The method of meditation varies according to the sect. In the Rinzai sect it commences with concentration on the long outgoing breath and then allowing the in-going breath to flow in naturally; the breaths are counted up to ten. When proficiency has been obtained in this breathing method, a koan is given as the subject for meditation. This is a question like a riddle and nonsensical on the face of it. There are said to be seventeen-hundred koans. The correct answers must be found intuitively. One of the first is, "What was your original face before you were born?" (This is more or less the same as Ramana Maharshi's question, "Who are you?") The meditation is broken at the end of every half hour when stiff limbs may be stretched. As well it may be broken by the monk or priest in charge who strides silently round the zendo with a wooden baton known as Manjusri's sword, which he uses to strike over the shoulder (twice on each shoulder in summer and four times in winter) any meditator who appears sleepy or who for some other reason he thinks would benefit by being whacked.

Zazen or meditation is considered the essence

1 Allen and Unwin.
2 Rider & Co.

of Zen training, but in practice temple-management plays nearly as great a part. This requires proficiency in many varied matters - book-keeping, repair-work, care of priceless picture-scrolls, cleaning, cooking, growing vegetables, caring for the exquisite gardens with their moss-lawns, shaped azalea bushes and espaliered pines. Most of these temples in Kyoto are "national treasures" and the Government pays 70% of the cost of repairs. But other than this they have had no regular income since the Meiji Restoration took away their lands and revenues. They must therefore depend upon donations and in Kyoto mostly from tourists. By and large the temples are not wealthy and the priest and his wife, for he is usually married, must be able to do most of the work themselves without paid labour.

The religious side of the training includes meditation, but also the conduct of the various ceremonies principally in honour of the Founders and departed spirits; and sutra-chanting is an art all to itself.

It is obvious that not all who inherit a temple, or for some other reason need to train as Zen priests, are suited to the training, and whether suited or not, nothing is made easy for them. The monk's life is austere and without intentional friendliness. Its object is to turn them out "tough as nails", I read somewhere. They must be prepared for the bitter cold of winter without artificial heating and with open windows and snow blowing on shaven heads, scanty clothing and prohibition of overcoats and socks indoors. The food is strictly vegetarian and poor vegetarian at that, and the hours of sleep are deliberately curtailed. Japanese life is harder than ours, but at the monastery it is made harder than it need be. And the method of training in meditation and Zanzen interviews with the roshi aim at creating fear and tension - "You must be cruel to be kind," I was told.

Unless a man has a definite vocation he must face the ordeal as he would an operation without an anaesthetic, knowing that at the end of four years he will be free. But even then it is not an easy life he faces. Now that there are many and varied avenues of employment open to promising young men, fewer and fewer resort to the Zen monastery for training. The priest at the temple where I stayed, told me that at the monastery where he trained there used to be forty-six monks and that now there were only sixteen. At Daitokuji the numbers had fallen to seven. He foresaw the time when temples would be cared for by those who were not Zen-trained. "Like caretakers' of a museum," I suggested and he agreed.

Most Europeans who have been at Zen monasteries have been there only as guests for a limited period. But one evening the European lady who established the European Zendo, herself a Zen priest, Mrs. Ruth Sasaki, told us of an American who had been accepted at one of the most austere monasteries. He would be there for perhaps ten years, and at least for sixteen months. He had a wife and two small boys. His wife had given her consent, and still wished to help Zennists.

As is required by this monastery, the young man had crouched with his head on the ground before the gate for three days seeking admission. This is never granted easily. By the third day he had worn a mark on his forehead and up till the very last he was afraid he might be refused. He was accepted, but not into the bosom of a friendly family. Monastery life is always hard and cold and this more-so than most.

I met his wife before I left Kyoto. She was planning to let her house and return to America for a year.

"Only for a year?" asked one of the Zen members. "Why come back at all when you can't see your husband?"

"But 1 have seen him," she said. "He had a free day and came home recently, he would hardly leave the larder, he was so hungry. They get only three hours sleep a night. At the end of a year he will decide whether to stay for only sixteen months

or for an indefinite period. That is why I shall come back then."

People who wish to train as Zen priests must put up with this austerity, but why should a European who has no need to? I came to the conclusion that this was like the question, "Why do people climb Mount Everest?" and the reply, "Because it's there." Whether it be a mountain or a monastery, it is a challenge and some will always be ready to take it up, no matter what the physical and mental suffering entailed, and no matter what the risk to health and even life.

Zen training "turns them out tough as nails". A picture rose to mind of the Samurai warriors who were calm, serene and also tough as nails, and not afraid to kill themselves if honour demanded it. Zen and the military had worked together, and the spirit of the soldier still runs through Zen training. But what I queried was whether the world today needs the Samurai. I suggest that the future is rather with the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi, and loving kindness and non-violence.

* * *

I visited the monastery three other times. The first was for a very elaborate ceremony at the commencement of the summer training period. All the Daitokuji priests came dressed in their splendid robes, and a few lay people as well as the monks. The roshi preached a sermon to the shrine, not to the audience ranged on each side, and once again several bent over books, and appeared to be taking the opportunity to make up for arrears of sleep! It was a very beautiful ceremony in the midst of austerely beautiful surroundings.

The second time was for meditation in the shrine room, for lay people are not allowed to meditate with the monks in the zendo. I was a trifle nervous because I had been warned that the monk who wielded "Manjusri's sword" to whack the meditators, had a very heavy hand, and when over the age of sixty one's bones become brittle! The stick is not used in the European Zendo, though why I do not know for it is used in all Zen monasteries of all Zen sects. "You have to be cruel to be kind," I was again told. The monks sit lotus style on the high wooden platforms on either side of the zendo, and I could hear them being whacked. Carrying the sword of Manjusri, the Bodhisattva of wisdom, the monk in charge cannot err. And the whacking is carried out with proper bowing and ritual. All the same I was glad he did not come to the shrine room while I was there!

Part way through the meditation session, the bell rang for Sanzen, and monks and lay European trainees lined up for interview with the roshi. On three occasions there was what seemed to be a frantic stampede among the monks. It was occasioned by a young monk being told to return to the roshi's room, and being terrified to do so. Blows and angry words was rained upon him to force him in, and one of the monks had to be taken by his leg and shoulders and thrust in.

* * *

The last occasion I visited the monastery was to interview the roshi. It took me seven weeks of persistency before I was at length granted an appointment.

I asked him, "Why are your disciples so afraid of you. You look, smiling and gentle enough now."

"Ah," he replied, "a teacher has to have two faces. You see my visitor's face. But my disciples see my teacher's face. I have to be stern to them. That is the only way they can learn."

And so, in addition to the physical austerity, the monk must expect to meet mental and emotional cruelty deliberately inflicted. You and I can never see the roshi's other face except in pictures. There was an especially striking picture on the wall screen of one of the Daitokuji temples. It showed a stern faced roshi with a sinister glint in his sideways-looking eyes, and his stick uplifted; slinking in at the back was a pale shrunken and terrified monk. Even the convinced European trainee must expect for at least a year to feel his knees trembling each time he goes into the roshi's small room. How much more the young Japanese who must train only so as to become a temple priest!

And then at the end of it all, will you have found enlightenment? None of the Zen priests I met appeared to have outward signs of any deeper enlightenment than the average of one's well-intentioned friends at home. I often used to think of simple-minded Brother Lawrence, a cook in a Christian monastery, who merely practised the presence of God; it seemed to me he probably knew more about satori, enlightenment and his "original face" than Zen masters who found the answers to the seventeen hundred koans.

* * *

But what about the idea of the Western exponents of Zen, who say all you have to do is to be spontaneous, and then one day the roshi twists your nose, and you have Realization?

Well, that is just a Western idea. Westerners import some things that are not there.

* * *

And now, leaving aside Zen training, let us turn to its poetry and art and some of its pithy stories. I do not think Zen has anything to add to Mahayana Buddhism, Shintoism and Taoism. But it has gathered wisdom from all these, and long after its training has been forgotten, some of its stories, its poetry and art will live.

Here is a story that might have come from the Buddha himself. It is of a nun going on pilgrimage who came to a village at sunset and none would offer her a night's lodging. She went into the fields and lay at the foot of a cherry tree. At midnight she woke and saw the cherry blossoms laughing to the misty moon. Overcome with the beauty, she rose and bowed towards the village saying:

Through their kindness in refusing me lodging,
I found myself beneath the blossoms on the night of the misty moon.

And listen to some of the profound truth as well as beauty in verses like these

You remain silent and it speaks.
You speak and it is silent.

When you are not in antagonism to it,
It turns out to be the same as complete awakening.

The wild geese do not intend to cast their reflections.
The water has no mind to receive their image.

The same applies to Zen art and the ability of the artist to identify 'himself with nature. And then there is the superb symbolism of the ox-herding pictures. The man catches sight of the tail of the ox, his own self; this is satori; he follows it, tames it, rides it, loses both himself and the ox, and then returns to ordinary life spreading a beneficence.

We can learn from Zen poetry and art, as we can learn from Catholic mystics. To do this there is no need to become a Zennist or a Roman Catholic, nor to undertake practices alien to our thought and temperament — nor to expect that Zen or Roman Catholicism will bring us enlightenment any better than other religions and ways of training.

You Must Cling Too

By A. Devaraja Mudaliar

In India we compare the aspirant who strives to the child of the monkey that clings to its mother as she jumps from tree to tree and the devotee who relies completely on the grace of the Guru to that of the cat that is quite helpless and is therefore picked up by its mother and carried in her mouth. Alluding to this, I said once that I was like the kitten and had cast the whole responsibility on Bhagavan. He laughed but would not agree. He said "Both are necessary; I will hold you but you must cling too."

SEEING IT SIMPLY

By Wei Wu Wei[1]

It is surely axiomatic that a phenomenon (an appearance, an object) cannot perform any action whatever on its own initiative, as an independent entity. In China this was illustrated by Chuangtze in his story of the sow who died while suckling her piglets: the little pigs just left her because their mother was no longer there. In Europe, even at that early date, the same understanding is expressed by the word `animus' which `animates' the phenomenal aspect of sentient beings, and this forms the basis of most religious beliefs. But whereas in the West the `animus' was regarded as personal to each phenomenal object, being the sentience of it, in the East the `animus' was called `heart' or `mind' or `consciousness', and in Buddhism and Vedanta was regarded as impersonal and universal, `Buddhamind', `*Prajna*', `*Atman*', etc.

When this impersonal `mind' comes into manifestation by objectifying itself as subject and object it becomes identified with each sentient object, and the concept of `I' thereby arises in human beings, whereby the phenomenal world as we know it and live it, appears to be what we call `real'. That, incidentally, is the only `reality' (thingness) we can ever know, and to use the term `real' (a thing) for what is not such, for the purely subjective, is an abuse of language.

In this process of personalising `mind' and thinking of it as `I', we thereby make it, which is subject, into an object, whereas `I' in fact can never be such, for there is nothing objective in `I', which is essentially a direct expression of subjectivity. This objectivising of pure subjectivity, calling it `me' or calling it `mind', is precisely what constitutes `bondage'. It is this concept, termed the Iconcept or ego or self, which is the supposed bondage from which we all suffer and from which we seek `liberation'.

It should be evident, as the Buddha and a hundred other awakened sages have sought to enable us to understand, that what we are is this `animating' mind as such, which is *noumenon*, and not the phenomenal object to which it gives sentience. This does not mean, however, that the phenomenal object has no kind of existence whatever, but that its existence is merely apparent, which is the meaning of the term `phenomenon', that is to say that it is only an appearance in consciousness, an objectivisation, without any nature of its own, being entirely dependent on the mind that objectivises it, which mind is its only nature, very much as in the case of any dreamed creature, as the Buddha in the *Diamond Sutra*, and many others after him have so patiently explained to us.

This impersonal, universal mind or consciousness, is our true nature, our only nature, all, absolutely all, that we are, and it is completely devoid of Iness.

This is easy enough to understand, and it would be simple indeed if it were the ultimate truth, but it is not, for the obvious reason that no such thing as an objective `mind' could exist, any more than an `I' or any other object, as a thinginitself. What it is, however, is totally devoid of any objective quality, and so cannot be visualised, conceptualised, or in any way referred to, for any such process would automatically render it an object of a subject which by definition it can never be. That is because the `mind' in question is the unmanifested source of manifestation, the process of which is its division into subject and object; and antecedent to such division there can be no subject to perceive an object, and no object to be perceived by a subject. Indeed, and as revealed by sages such as Padma Sambhava,

1 For a note on Wei Wu Wei see our issue of April 1964. See also the review of his latest work in this issue.

that which is seeking to conceive and to name this unmanifested source of manifestation is precisely this `whole mind' that is the `animating' or *prajnatic* functioning which itself is the seeking, so that the sought is the seeker thereof. Profoundly to understand this is Awakening to what is called `enlightenment'.

This reasoned visualisation, therefore, like all doctrine, is merely conceptual, devoid of factuality, a structure of theoretical imagination, a symbolical diagram devised in order to enable us to understand something immediate that can never become knowledge. Yet that ultimate `something', which is no `thing', is nevertheless what the universe is, and all that we are.

The psychological `Iconcept' has no nature of its own, is no `thing' and could not possibly create genuine `bondage'. There cannot be any such thing as bondage at all, but only the idea of such. There is no liberation, for there is no `thing' from which to be freed. If the whole conceptual structure is seen as what it is, it must necessarily collapse, and the bondageenlightenment nonsense with it. That is called Awakening, awakening to the natural state which is that of every sentient being. Sri Ramana Maharshi taught just that when he said that `enlightenment' is only being rid of the notion that one is not `enlightened', and Maharshi might have been quoting the T'ang dynasty Chinese sage Huihai, known as the Great Pearl, when he stated that Liberation is liberation from the notion of `liberation'. He might also have been quoting Huangpo (d. 850), of whom he is unlikely ever to have heard, when they both used the same words, full of humour, to someone asking about `his' mind: each sage asked in reply, "How many minds have you?"

How many minds had they, those two young men? Why, none at all. Not only not two, but not one. Nor were they themselves a `mind', for there could not be such a thing as a `mind' for them to be. Neither `they' nor `mind' ever had, or ever could have, any objective being whatever, for never has any kind of objective being been, nor will such ever be. All that, and every `that' that ever was thought up and `that' is the most purely objective of pronouns is the essence of the gigantic phantasmagoria of objectivity, which we spend our lives building up, and in which we search desperately for some `truth' that could not possibly be there. The whole vast construction is a fantasy, a dream, as the Buddha (or whoever wrote it in his name) told us in the *Diamond Sutra*, and the truth that a dream represents or misrepresents, of which it is a reflection or a deflection, is the dreaming source of it which is all that it is. That source can never have a name, because a name denotes a phenomenon and there is no phenomenal dreamer, but a functioning that is called dreaming. Sri Bhagavan called it `II': if it must be called anything, no nominal form could ever come nearer, or be less misleading as an indication, than his term.

All objectivisation is conceptual, all conceptuality is inference, and all inference is as empty of truth as a vacuum is empty of air. Moreover there is no truth, never has been and never could be; there is no thusness, suchness, isness, nor anything positive or negative whatever. There is just absolute absence of the cognisable, which is absolute presence of the unthinkable and the unknowable which neither is nor is not. Inferentially this is said to be an immense and radiant splendour untrammelled by notions of time and space, and utterly beyond the dim, reflected sentience of temporal and finite imagination.

He to whom the Eternal Word speaketh is set free from a multitude of opinions.

- *The Imitation of Christ*

THE VIRTUOUS WAY OF LIFE

By HH Sri Jaya Chamaraja Wadiyar

In the days when titles were still used in India, the Maharaja of Mysore, now Governor of Madras State, was already an outstanding exponent of Hindu culture. Since then he has become widely known as a cultural and intellectual ambassador abroad and an upholder of dharma at home. Most prominent of his books is 'Dattatreya, The Way and the Goal'[1], containing an annotated translation of that purest of Advaitic texts the Avadhuta Gita. A thought-provoking little study of the Bhagavad Gita published recently, is reviewed elsewhere in this issue.

The Maharaja's predecessor had a private interview with Bhagavan, and he himself is a known visitor at this Ashram. We are glad to be able to publish this article by him.

Ancient Indian literature is full of references to the advantage and necessity of leading an ethical way of life. In the earliest literary record of India, the *Rig Veda*, one finds appreciative statements made of the righteous way of life which a man is called upon to adopt. God Varuna, the presiding deity of the moral order of the universe, is often invoked in very humble terms to come to the aid of man and to help him in leading a sincere life characterised by the cultivation of truth and goodness. The Vedic seers are never tired of requesting the gods to bless them with fortitude which was so essential to them in order to lead the right kind of life. The same theme is continued in the philosophic treatises called *Upanisads* where it is pointed out that the ethical way of life alone can bring to man much coveted prize of Liberation. The greatness and the glory of following the virtuous way of life is also the subject matter for treatment in the succeeding stages of Indian literature, science and art. A thoughtful observation made in the mighty Indian Epic, the *Mahabharata*, on the nobility of a righteous life merits our earnest attention and reflection. Yudhisthira, the eldest of the Pandava brothers and the hero of the epic poem, was once confronted by a *Yaksa* or celestial being near a lake to which Yudhisthira went in order to drink water. The latter did not allow Yudhisthira to partake of the waters of the lake until he answered convincingly certain questions. And one important question that was addressed to Yudhisthira related to the virtuous way of life. The celestial being asked him: "What exactly constitutes 'the way'" (*Ka dik*) and Yudhisthira answered: "The good is 'the way'" (*Santah Dik*)[1]. By this answer, he was indicating

1Published by Allen and Unwin.

to the questioner that man fulfils himself only by leading a good and virtuous life.

In order to understand the full content of the expression "good way of life" it is well to bestow attention on an episode mentioned in the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad*[2]. According to it, once the gods, men and demons were residing with their Father, Brahma, learning the sacred scriptures. The period of their studentship was over and the gods requested their Father kindly to give them his final instructions. The Father consented to do so and cryptically uttered the single syllable "Da". The gods said that they understood the instruction and it was that they should control themselves (*Damayata*). And Brahma confirmed their understanding.. It was now the turn of the men to get instruction and when they sought for it Brahma repeated the syllable "Da". The men claimed that they too understood him and said that the instruction in their case was that they must practise charity (*Dana*). And Brahma agreed with their interpretation also. Next came the turn of the demons. Much to their surprise they found their Father pronouncing for the third time the syllable "Da". The demons were quick to follow him and replied that they also understood his advice and it was that they should practice compassion (*Dayaddhavam*). And the Father agreed with this interpretation too. We also learn from the *Upanisad* that when it thunders, the sounds of 'Da' are heard announcing the instruction of Brahma that everyone in the universe should practise the virtues of control, charity and compassion. These virtues constituted the very texture of man's good life and it was therefore man's duty to cultivate these in his own interest.

Annotated thus, the meaning of the expression "the good way" becomes clear. It is the assiduous attention to be bestowed by all men of wisdom on the three principal virtues of controlling the senses, of practising alms-giving and of cultivating a compassionate attitude towards all beings. Sri Sankaracharya makes these concepts clearer in his commentary on the *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*. When the Father of the universe was instructing the gods, he knew that there was the danger of the gods becoming unruly because they could have everything they wanted on account of their acquired merit. Therefore, he was cautioning them against committing such an offence and advised them to practise control of the senses[3]. Sankara points out the reason why *Prajapati* or the Father of the universe asked men to practise charity. It was because there was the likelihood of men becoming greedy and cheating their fellow-beings of their rightful share. Hence the advice that they should cultivate the habit of giving gifts to others[4]. Then again the Father realised that there was always a chance of the demons misusing their natural strength and therefore called upon them to cultivate the virtue of 'compassion'[5].

These three main ethical principles receive much attention at the hands of Indian thinkers and preceptors of law. Sage Yajnavalkya recommends control of the senses, alms-giving and mercy as good qualities which are to be practised by all human beings[6]. The *Bhagavad Gita* insists that a man aspiring to the highest spiritual value should cultivate these principles[7]. Vyasa, the revered author of the epic *Mahabharata* desires that human beings should dedicate themselves to the performance of *tapas*

1 *Mahabharata*: Aranyaparva: 297.60-61.

2 *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*: V. 2.1.

3 *Adanta yuyam svabhavatah ato danta bhavata iti' —* Sankara's Commentary: V. 21.

4 '*Svabhavato lubdha yuyam ato yatha saktya samvibhajata*' — Ibid: V. 2.2

5 *'Krura yuyam himsadiparah, ato dayaddhyam pranisu dayam kurwata iti'*. — Ibid: V. 2.3

6 *Yajnavalkya smrti*: 1.4.122.

7 XVI. 1.

8 *Mahabharata*. 3.297-39.

or austerity and that this is well done by the faithful observance of self-control, charity and compassion. He is firmly of the view that *tapas* or austerity of this nature will make a man great. (*Tapasa vindate mahat*)[8]. A man of charitable disposition is bound to become famous too and such is the opinion of Yudhisthira, an exemplar of Indian virtue[9]. (*Danamekapadam yasah*). Sage Vyasa is no less enthusiastic about the practice of compassion. He is of the view that it is the highest of all virtues (*Anrsamsyam paro dharmah*)[10]. Not less is his admiration for the principle of *Dama* or control of the mind[11].

These virtues were practised by famous men of India and their activities are recorded in the legendary lore and literary texts. One remembers often the name of Jimutavahana, the great Vidyadhara prince, who offered himself as food for Garuda the leader of the birds and thus saved the lives of many serpents which otherwise would have become victims of the greedy birds' wrath[12]. The unparalleled example of a person who practised charity of an extraordinary kind is described in the poem Raghuvamsa[13]. He was Raghu, son of Dilipa. He did many glorious deeds, conducted wars and achieved notable victories. Having gained universal sovereignty, he performed a great sacrifice called 'Visvajit' in which he gave away all the wealth he had. Indeed he became so poor that when a young sage called Kautsa came and requested of him a gift of money, the king had hardly any with him to give, and so had to go to war with Kubera, the God of Wealth. Amongst those who practised the control of the senses to the full may be mentioned the great Bhishmacarya of the *Mahabharata*. He was the son of King Santanu and Ganga, the river goddess. When Santanu, father of Bhishma was old he desired to marry again. Bhishma found a beautiful damsel for him. But the parents of the bride desired that the son to be born to their daughter should occupy the throne after Santanu instead of Bhishma. The great Bhishma readily consented and not only renounced the throne for himself but also remained a bachelor until his death.

There are also instances recorded in ancient Indian religious and secular texts of people suffering a fall on account of their non-adherence to these important principles of virtue. The life of the sage Visvamitra is a case in point. He was born a Kshatriya but by intense austerities he wanted to become a great *Rishi* or seer. Unfortunately he developed a liking for Menaka, a celestial beauty. This moved him away from his intended goal and he had to toil hard to come back to his original ways. If the case of Visvamitra illustrates the ruin resulting from uncontrolled passion that of Duryodhana, the wicked opponent of the Pandavas, illustrates the evil effects of greed. He disregarded the truth that the *Isavasya Upanisad* teaches us, that one should not covet an other's property (*Ma gradhah kasya sviddhanam*) and ruined himself. To take another example, Ravana the cruel opponent of Rama shows by his behaviour that power in the hands of an evil-minded person leads to suffering and sin. The following story about Ravana illustrates how 'pride goeth before a fall'. Once he was travelling in his aerial chariot and came to mount Kailas, the abode of Siva. There Nandiswara, the great devotee of Siva, asked the king to go back and not to fly over the holy mountain. Ravana became angry at this challenge to his power, and in his inordinate pride dug his mighty arms deep under the mountain and began to shake it. This disturbed Siva and his consort Parvati. Siva understood the cause for the shaking of the mountain and gently pressed down his toe; and Ravana's arms were caught tightly. After vain attempts to free himself, he began to wail and thus came to be called Ravana (the Wailer). This story of Ravana and his pride is of topical

9 *Ibid*: 3.297-49,
10 *Ibid*: 3.297-55.
11 *Ibid*: 3.297.
12 *Vide* '*Nagananda*' -- a drama of Sriharsa,
13 *Raghuvamsa*. Canto IV and V.

interest and indicates the dangers of the knowledge of nuclear Science in the hands of an unscrupulous man or government. The lesson to be drawn is that those who possess the strength of a giant should use it in a virtuous way and for the good of mankind.

The Bhagavad Gita takes cognisance of the role of the good life in the progress of an individual. It mentions steadfastness, sacrifice, study, peacefulness and modesty as general characteristics of the good way of life. It speaks of two types of quality, the divine and the demoniac and points out that fortitude, purity, vigour and forgiveness are qualities which belong to the 'divine ' while arrogance and unwisdom belong to the demoniac. The chief purpose of this teaching is to call the good to the divine way of life and make them discard the demoniac[14].

14 *Isavasya Upanisad*: 1.

In other words, it calls upon people not to combine power with pride but with God. The result is very like the combination of Siva, the God, and Sakti, his consort, which brings happiness to the *sakta* or devotee.

What is the ultimate goal of the 'good way of life'? The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* which speaks of the episode of Brahma and his repetition of the syllable 'Da' thrice, gives also the answer to this question. The *Upanishad* analyses the word "*Sat ya*" or Truth into three syllables, *Sa ti* and *yam* and identifies the first and the last syllables with Truth. It finally points out by implication that the person who practises the good way of life characterised by the three Da's *Dama, Dana* and *Daya* will know and realise Truth or Brahman[15], and this realisation is the ultimate goal of the good way of life.

15 *Brihadaranyaka*: V. 51.

All the various doctrines and paths originating at different times and in different countries lead ultimately to the same Supreme Truth, like the many different paths leading travellers from different places to the same city. It is ignorance of the Absolute Truth and misunderstanding of the different doctrines that causes their followers to quarrel in bitter animosity with one another. They consider their own particular dogmas and paths to be the best, as every traveller may think though wrongly, his own to be the only or the best path.

Yoga Vasishta.

He who sees all beings in the same Self and the same Self in all beings does not hate anybody. When a man knows that all beings are ultimately the Self and realizes this unity in experience there remains no delusion or grief for him.

Isha Upanishad.

I, Lalla, wandered far in search of Siva, the omnipresent Lord. After much wandering, I found Him at last within myself, abiding in His own home.

Lalla, a Kashmiri woman saint.

Many are the means of crossing the ocean of reincarnation of which the pure words of the Vedas speak; but Tulasi says 'Real peace of heart 'cannot be attained without giving up the notions of 'I' and 'mine'.

Tulasidas.

THE CANDLE OF THE LORD

By Professor Eknath Easwaran

A few years ago I was taken by a friend to visit the Truman Museum in Independence, Missouri, and among the exhibits I saw there nothing impressed me more deeply than a little clay lamp presented to President Truman by the Jewish community of Boston. This lamp is said to belong to the days of King David of the Old Testament. At its base was an inscription which may be translated: *The Spirit of Man is the Candle of the Lord*. (*Proverbs 20: 27*).

How this candle is to be lit has been revealed by founders of every religion, by Krishna and Christ, by the Buddha and Mohamad, by Zoroaster and Lao-Tzu. If I may put in a nutshell the principles that govern all major religions, it would be very simply: (1) that all life, the entire phenomenal world, has as its basis something that is completely divine; (2) that it is possible for everyone to know this divine ground of all existence; (3) that life has only one purpose - not to make money, nor to enjoy pleasure, nor to achieve success, nor to attain fame - but to know and be united with the divine ground of our existence.

I have very little interest in theology, in metaphysics or even in philosophy. My approach to the scriptures is entirely on the basis that they are practical manuals to the art of living, and the truths in them are verifiable by anyone prepared to undergo a certain ethical and mental discipline.

The Bhagavad Gita, says Aldous Huxley, "is perhaps the most systematic scriptural statement of the Perennial Philosophy." Scholars says that it was composed about 2500 years ago, but I, who am no scholar in this field, would unhesitatingly declare that the Gita is timeless. It is based upon the Upanishads which have been called by Schopenhauer the most noble, most exalted study of all mankind. There is a very simple Sanskrit verse about the *Gita*: all the *Upanishads* are cows. The man who milks the cows is Krishna. The calf is Arjuna, and you and I are the drinkers of the milk, the immortal elixir that comes from the *Upanishads*.

In the *Upanishads* there is a heart-breaking cry that has been echoing down through the ages: "From the unreal lead me to the Real. From darkness lead me to Light. From death lead me to Immortality."

In one of the most profound of the *Upanishads*, the *Katha Upanishad*, there is a significant dialogue between Yama, the King of Death, and the boy Nachiketa, which may be interpreted in this way. Nachiketa asks: "Is there no way to conquer death?" The King of Death, after testing him as a worthy disciple, declares this greatest of secrets that has come down through all religions. "As long as you identify yourself with the body, which is subject to change, so long will you be subject to the greatest of changes which is called death. If by some means you could break through this identification with the changing body and learn to identify yourself instead with the changeless *Atman*, the Lord seated within the Lotus of your Heart, then you would transcend death here and now." Nachiketa then asks the King of Death: "Please tell me how I can transcend death here and now." To this the King of Death replies: "In order to attain this immortal state you must learn to bring the mind under complete control through one-pointed meditation on God. He who reaches this level of consciousness becomes united with God through His infinite grace and is freed from the cycle of birth and death."

It is said in the Psalm: "Be still and know that I am God." To know God, to know the divine ground of our existence, we have to go far beyond the senses, the intellect and the mind, which are but finite instruments; and logic tells us that a finite instrument cannot be used for fathoming the infinite. The precious experiences of mystics all over the world bear witness to this transcendental

mode of knowing. The natural senses cannot possess God or unite thee to Him; nay, thy inward faculties of understanding, will and memory can only reach after God, but cannot be the place of His habitation in thee. But there is a root or depth of thee from whence all these faculties come forth, as lines from a centre, or as branches from the body of the tree. This depth is the unity, the eternity - I had almost said the infinity - of thy soul; for it is so infinite that nothing can satisfy it or give it rest but the infinity of God." This is the testimony of William Law, a British mystic of the eighteenth century.

In the *Gita* Lord Krishna - who is the very understanding Teacher in the heart of everyone gives Arjuna a practical lesson in meditation: "Repose your mind, concentrate your mind, still your mind completely in Me. Then you will be united with me in this very life, here and now." Arjuna points out: "It is easier to control the wind than the mind." Krishna says: "Arjuna, I know it is very difficult to control the mind, but there is a very simple secret: regular, systematic, steadfast practice."

As our meditation deepens, we are rather taken aback to discover that we have seldom been able to exercise control over our mind. We do not live intentionally. As we learn, through meditation, to exercise control over the deeper levels of consciousness, we begin to get over this obsessive identification with the body and are able to use the body. We are able to get over this oppressive identification with the mind and are able to use the mind. In order to use these instruments for fulfilling the supreme purpose of life, we have to become detached in a great measure from them, and this is what meditation enables us to do as soon as it begins to deepen. Good health, peace of mind, a capacity to face adequately the storm and stress of life, and integration of character which takes place when all desires are subordinated to this supreme desire: these are the marks of the man who is making, progress on the path of meditation.

St. Francis of Assissi refers to the body as Brother Ass. He says: This is Brother Ass, and I am the rider. As long as I consider myself part of Brother Ass, I have neither liberty nor the capacity to live intentionally.

When we look around us we make the discovery that we are more the slaves of our possessions than the masters. Gandhiji's campaign against compulsive possessiveness has its inspiration from the mystics of all ages who warn us: If you want to be free, don't be attached. This is no plea for poverty, but for detachment. It is possible for a labourer in his cottage to be attached to his few coppers and clay pots, as it is possible for a king in his palace to be detached and free.

Ramakrishna has summed up the whole teaching of the *Gita* in one word. The word *gita* in Sanskrit reversed becomes *tyagi*, which means renunciation. This does not mean poverty, nor monotony but a dynamic, creative quality which enables you to live as the master and not as the victim of life.

The *Gita* lays down three paths to the supreme goal of life: karma yoga or the path of action, *jnana* yoga or the path of knowledge, *bhakti* yoga or the path of devotion.

(1) Karma yoga means the path of work or action as an offering to God. Every act must be performed as an offering to God, and there must be no craving after the fruits of action, which is very, very difficult.

(2) *Jnana* yoga is usually understood in the West as the path of the intellect. It is more correctly the path of gnosis in the Greek sense of the word, a transcendental, super-conscious mode of knowing.

(3) *Bhakti* yoga is the path of devotion. When we are able to tap the vein of devotion inherent in all of us, this path becomes a swift, safe and sweet one.

I believe that all three - action, knowledge and devotion - have a legitimate place in our daily life, but they must be based on the regular and systematic practice of meditation.

The climax of meditation is called in Sanskrit *samadhi*, *sam* meaning *with*, and *adhi* meaning

Lord. It is a sound educational axiom that knowing is a function of being, and we come to know God because in His infinite grace He allows us to join Him by "actual participation" as one of the Catholic mystics calls it. When *samadhi* or becoming united with God has become permanent it is called *Moksha* by the Hindus and *Nirvana* by the Buddhists. The man who has attained union with God has come to learn for himself who he is and after that he has only one purpose or ostensible purpose in life, that is to remind others who they are.

Meditation develops the most precious capacity that man can have, the capacity to turn anger into compassion, fear into fearlessness and hatred into love. I am never tired of repeating that this is the greatest miracle of meditation, not seeing visions, not hearing voices but the capacity to purify the heart of all that is selfish and degrading. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

The *Gita* gives a perfect picture of the man who has become one with God. Krishna says: There is no one so dear to my heart as he who with love for everyone - friend and foe, for those who attack him, vilify him, torture him - will have only kindness and compassion. As Jesus says: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."

In life all of us need happiness, but all of us need sorrow too. Sorrow can enable us to grow spiritually, and I doubt if there has been any mystic whose heart has not been broken many times before attaining union with God. Therefore, when sorrow is necessary for his spiritual growth, the man of God will welcome it with open arms. Put him amidst poverty, amidst wealth. Make him healthy, make him sick. Make him famous, make him infamous. He will still be content; he will still be the same because he has identified himself with that which does not change. Why should he be affected by changes outside when he knows who dwells in his consciousness?

Every moment in life we have this choice to make: Shall I identify myself with my *atman*, my soul, with the Christ within, the Krishna enthroned in my heart, or shall I identify myself with the body that is subject to change? Krishna says: You can never afford to lose your vigilance because you have to be constantly and ceaselessly striving. Your will has to be so resolute that you will not allow anything to make you swerve from the Goal. All mystics, all saints, are agreed this is the highest destiny to which all mankind moves. The poet, the musician, the painter, the sculptor, yes, many are artistic, but only a small segment of their personality contains beauty. The man of God is completely aflame with God; not just one narrow sector, but every cell of his consciousness is filled with this beauty, this glory, this effulgence.

When Dr. Oppenheimer, the distinguished American atomic scientist, witnessed the experimental explosion of the atomic bomb on the desert of New Mexico he recalls that what immediately flashed into his mind was the terrible line from the Gita: "I am come as Time, the waster of the people, ready for the hour that ripens to their doom." On this subject Meister Eckhart says: "Time is what keeps the light from reaching us. There is no greater obstacle to God than time. And not only time but temporalities, not only temporal things but temporal affections; not only temporal affections but the very taint and smell of time."

When we practice meditation, we are being delivered out of time, which means that we are being delivered out of the Jaws of the King of Death. In one of the deeply moving devotional hymns of Sankara, we are told: Don't be proud of your youth, your wealth, your name. Time will steal these from you in the twinkling of an eye. Therefore, take shelter at the feet of the Lord.

To repeat what I said earlier, death is a great change in which these chemical constituents of the body are resolved into another state. You are subject to death only when you identify yourself with your body which is in a state of chemical flux. Krishna says: through meditation on the Lord, by identifying yourself with the Lord, you can break through once and for all this primal compulsion,

this age-old fallacy that you are the body. As Jesus says to Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he be always alive." Krishna says again: Learn to focus all your consciousness on Me, and it is my responsibility to release you, to rescue you from this cycle of birth and death that is called life.

"For Thou Wilt Light My Candle: The Lord My God will Enlighten My Darkness." (*Psalm 18: 28*).

THE TEARING OF THE MASK

By Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

There comes a time - but do not ask
When - since I know not .... This I know and this
Only-that unto each one comes nemesis,
A sparkling night naked with an excess
Of splendour troubling hearts with loneliness;
The jet-black diamond hour which tears the mask
Nature hath wrought with cunning,
Most intricate of masks, both you and me,
Self-evaders who keep running
After brief thrills of time from dusk till morning,
From morn to dusk-tide, scorning
The tactiturn rapture of Eternity....
That instant of unmasking is divine
And hence, a seal of everlastingness,
Torture-packed instant on which angels press
Their heavenly weight so man's dividing line
Between himself and him be cancelled quite,
Unmasking in sheer process of the Light
Demanding sacrificial torture. Lo!
The butcher dooms the animal at one blow,
Marking an act of mercy - while, though odd
It might appear, the hammer-strokes of God
Are never-ending since, when they began
To strike at the nailed mask unnailing each
With sheerest smashing, until the nails spin
Scattering around and whirling beyond reach
Of that same mask or even the face which wore it:
I had a mask once - Love, you came and tore it
To shreds, sweet heaven's representative!
That I might cease to perish, start to live
A new life-lease lent to me by such grief
As hath a deep contempt for beauty that is brief

MANY ARE CALLED BUT FEW ARE CHOSEN

By Sagittarius

Is there any way of recognising the pearls of esoteric truth about which I spoke in my previous article? No infallible way, but a good general rule is that they will be found to be those sayings of Christ's which modern Christians ignore. For instance, have you ever heard a sermon preached on the text that many are called but few are chosen? Or read an exposition of it by a theologian or apologist? Perhaps by the fire-eating predestinationists of the early Calvinist Church, but not since then. Today we pass it over in uneasy silence.

Called to what? Chosen for what?

For membership of the Christian Church? Or any of them? Can one imagine a board of missionaries screening applicants for conversion (or, in Christian countries, for baptism or confirmation) and accepting about one in ten?

Then to heaven? That would carry the rather grim corollary that most people go to hell. And indeed, Christ's teaching does sound grievously like that when he warns that: "wide is the gate and broad the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in threat: because strait is the gate and narrow the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."[1]

But isn't it possible just to be neutral? It would be generally agreed that few people are striving in a Christian way, making their life a pathway to salvation, finding the strait gate and following the narrow way, but that few also are actively vicious or destructive. Most people are just making what they can of their life, not exerting themselves to raise it to a godlike level but also not sinking to a bestial or diabolical level. Can't they avoid both Christ's ways and just make life a camping ground to be enjoyed while it lasts, with no thought of where it may lead to? That is not what Christ taught. He mentioned no third possibility; only the two roads - up or down. And he said that most follow the latter. There is a saying ascribed to him in Islamic countries which, although not contained in the gospels, fits in well with his teaching; that is: "The world is a bridge; pass over but do not build a house on it." What is reported in the gospels is that Christ specifically repudiated neutrality by saying that those who were not with him were against him. Christianity is not a comfortable religion - not for those who take it seriously, not for those who heed Christ's warnings. It was not comfortable for his contemporaries. I said that in the first of this series of articles, and some readers took offence, thinking that I was attributing the blame for it to Christ. The blame was on those who needed aggressive handling; the blame is on those today who refuse to heed the warning, clear though it is.

Religious injunctions reflect spiritual laws which are as natural and universal on their level as physical laws are on theirs. Despite appearances, a tree cannot cease to grow or decay and just stand still, remaining as it is. Nor can a human body. Up to a certain age the process of growth takes place in it. From an even earlier age, perhaps from birth, processes of decay are also active in it. Why should we suppose that the human soul is exempt from this law, that it can stand aside from change and shirk its destiny, taking neither the narrow nor the broad way but just camping out and having a good time? Note that I say 'soul' and not 'spirit'. The Mediaeval schoolmen distinguished between '*animus*' and '*spiritus*'. The Spirit is indeed changeless, birthless, deathless, One with the Father,[2] perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect;[3] but the Spirit is above the laws of change, just IS; and to realize its identity with the Spirit is just the task which the soul has to take up.

1 St. Matthew, VII, 13-14.

2 St. John, X, 30.

3 St. Matthew, V, 48,

Philosophical technicalities apart, it is clear to all that man as he is on earth is not changeless or perfect. Therefore he cannot abjure the need for effort which his humanhood lays upon him. Even to human observation it is clear that he who does not improve deteriorates, that sitting out from the dance of nature, or trying to, means losing one's place in it and falling back. But it is not left to human observation, it is determined by Christ; and he leaves no camping ground between the two ways. By not taking the arduous one people are *ipso facto* following that which, he says, leads to destruction. That they are the vast majority is an appalling thought; but that does not make it any the less a fact.

The narrow path Christ spoke of is the path leading to salvation or realization. The two are the same. The exaggerated importance ascribed to death leads people to distinguish between after-death salvation and realization achieved in this life, but really there is no difference. Neither is attained without effort. The effort must be continuous. Even of those who find the 'strait gate' few follow the 'narrow path' to the end. This is stated even more explicitly in the *Bhagavad Gita*, which reminds us that even those who are called are few compared with the many not called, that even those find the 'strait gate' are few, let alone those who follow the 'narrow path' to the end. "Among thousands perhaps one strives for Realization; among thousands who strive for Realization perhaps one knows Me as I am."[4]

One who takes the narrow path needs no scripture to tell him this. He sees all the company of his friends or former friends, all the society in which he used to move, occupied with their worldly aims and frustrations, satisfied or dissatisfied, but in neither case willing to turn away from it all and seek true happiness. How Christ's heart must have ached when he spoke of the broad path and the many who tread it! Even after setting forth, a man may look around at his companions or former companions in the quest and see this one fallen back into academic scholarship, that one following a false trail, another claiming to be what he is not, and be hard put to it to count two or three who are still striving in a good way. And even of those, how many will attain?

Read with understanding, Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* is a very sad story. The whole noble company of knights were gathered together at King Arthur's court for the feast of Pentecost, and while they were seated at the Round Table the Sangraal passed through the hall on a beam of light, but veiled so that none actually saw it. They were asked who would undertake its quest and all alike pledged themselves and rode forth with courage and high hopes. Some, however, soon turned back, finding the tug of the world too strong; some perished by the way; some were daunted or overthrown by the dragons of the ego; some bewitched or cast into dungeons by enchanters, the false guides who beset the path; some turned aside to lesser quests or settled down in castles along the way; some attained a single vision of the Sangraal and recognised that, for them, that was sufficient achievement for this lifetime; and out of all that noble company only three pursued the quest to its end.

For the many who have been called but will not be chosen, who have found the 'strait gate' but do not tread the 'narrow path' to the end, the *Bhagavad Gita* does indeed offer a consolation, one that is at the same time compassionate and logical. Arjuna asks Krishna about those who strive but fail to achieve and is assured that no effort is wasted. Even those who fail to bring the quest to a good end, to the ultimate Goal, in this lifetime retain what progress they have made and will be so circumstanced in their next birth as to enable them to take up again from where they stopped and to press on further. Which also explains the phenomenon of those who, like the Maharshi attain the Goal with the very little effort made in this lifetime.

But what is a clear message apparent to all seekers from the viewpoint of the quest is meaningless in any other context. When will Christians wake up to the heritage Christ left them and the warnings he gave?

4 Ibid., VII, 3.

TRIBUTE TO SAI BABA

By Paidi Venkateswarlu

The author of this article gives little factual information about Sai Baba. In India he is so well known that it is not necessary. Foreign readers are referred to 'The Incredible Sai Baba' Briefly: he was a great saint living at the turn of the century - died in 1918. He had both Hindu and Muslim disciples, refusing to say that he belonged to either religion. He wrote nothing (which is perhaps why he is so little known outside India) but worked an extraordinary profusion of miracles. Like the Maharshi, he appointed no successor but remained himself the guru after death. He still appears in dreams and visions to those who turn to him with true devotion, answers their prayers, cures sickness, grants boons, removes obstacles. This explains why, with no organised propaganda and no institution in his name, his devotees are far more numerous now than in his lifetime.*

Man is in quest of God and God is in search of man from all eternity. The quest for God differs from man to man. The highest function of every religion is to provide a path leading back to our original Home from which we have strayed away. Indeed, each religion has various paths, those in one being similar to those in another. Whatever the path may be, the goal or destination is the same for all; God-realization or Self-realization.

Self-realization or *Moksha* or Salvation[1] or *Fana* or *Nirvana* are different names of the identical state ultimately to be reached. It is very difficult to reach this goal without a guide. As the *Kathopanishad* puts it:

"O Ignorant Men! Awake! Arise! Approach a Supreme Guru who will dispel your darkness! The path is as hard and sharp as a razor's edge. And never stop till the goal is reached."

The great saint, Kabir, also says "Who but a Guru will rescue you?" Jalaluddin Rumi, a great Persian Sufi saint says "This path can be trodden only through an intermediary, the guru. But he alone is a guru who is dead to self and is established in

Identity. He is one who is above the *shariyat* (formal religious obligations). He can help in the path of *fariquat* (experiences leading to realization of God). So, seek such a one, that you may attain union with the Lord."

Kabir again says, "I was floating along the current of the World and its traditions. On the way, I met the true Guru who showed me the path to Light." "The Body is a poisonous creeper, the Guru is a

* The *Incredible Sai Baba* by Arthur Osborne, published by Orient Longmans, Calcutta, and Rider & Co., London.

1 Eastern writers are apt to presume this, but actually 'salvation' is used by Christian writers to indicate a state short of *Nirvana*, where the separate individual being still exists, although beatified. (Editor.)

storehouse of nectar; even though a Guru could be found only at the cost of your head, you should consider the bargain cheap." "The true Guru is a valiant knight. He shoots with full force and strikes from navel to crown; the wound is not visible outwardly, but the inside is shattered to bits."

The *Guru Gita* declares: "Difficult it is to renounce sense-objects, difficult is the vision of Truth, difficult is the attainment of Self-realization, without the grace of the Guru."

There are gurus and gurus these days. Every man who can perform miracles or has attained some powers or who can gather a group of disciples calls himself a Guru. How can one who has not himself realized, enable others to realise the Self? Says the *Guru Gita* again: "The Guru who has no knowledge, who is a liar and a hypocrite should be shunned. He does not know how to bring peace to himself. How can he bring it to others?" It is like the blind leading the blind which ultimately results in both of them falling into a ditch of darkness.

That is why the scriptures have laid down the qualities needed for a Guru. They are (1) he must be very able and discriminating (2) he must be full of spiritual wisdom (3) he must be pure and clear-sighted; (4) he must always be imperturbable and good-natured; (5) he must speak little and be free from the six enemies: lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride and jealousy; (6) his conduct must be upright, free from lust and acquisitiveness and, most important of all (7) he must be self-controlled and in fact, Self-realized, so that he can show God to others who seek Him.

First and foremost, a Guru must be Self-realized. The *Upanishads* say that one who knows the Brahman becomes the Brahman. There are degrees of realization. These are said to be Gurus, Sat-Gurus and Samartha Sat-Gurus. There are also Swamijis, Saints and Sages. Gurus are on the fourth plane; Sat-Gurus on the fifth and sixth; and Samartha Sat-Gurus on the seventh plane and beyond[2]. This last category are as rare as the flowering of an aloe. Sri Sai Baba, Bhagavan Ramana and Sri Ramakrishna are recent examples of this class.

Sri Sai Baba has really no name. Many such surprises occur in his life. He declared: "They call me Sai Baba. My father's name is also Sai Baba. My Guru is Venkusa. My religion is Kabir. My caste is Parvardhitar (God)." He meant to say that He is nameless and that all names belong to Him. He is birthless and deathless and hence fatherless: He is above all religions, hence all religions belong to Him; and He is above the castes.

The word 'Sai' is Persian and means a saint or a fakir, and the word 'Baba' is the Hindi for father, so that the whole name means 'the Saintly Father'. It was simply a term of endearment and respect.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa says, "'Sai' is the name given to a person who has reached the highest stage of 'Paramahamsa' of our Scriptures." A *Paramahamsa* is none other than the *Avadhuta* whose characteristics are delineated in detail in the *Avadhuta Gita*.

So the *Avadhuta* is the embodiment of the Brahman. He walks amidst us as Brahman and his precepts are meant to guide us in our day-to-day life.

Sri Sai Baba Himself declared outright: "The Guru is all the Gods. Trust in the Guru fully. That is the only *sadhana*."

"Listen mother," he said to a lady devotee who asked him for initiation into a mantra: "my Guru never taught me any mantras, so how shall I blow any into your ears? Just remember that the Guru's tortoise-like[3] loving glance brings happiness. Do not try to get a mantra or instruction from anybody. Make me the sole object of your thoughts and action, and you will certainly attain *Paramartha*

2 This is a far from simple question. It will be taken up in a later issue of *The Mountain Path*. For the time being the author's statements are merely recorded.

3 For an elucidation of this strange expression see below the description of the three types of initiation. (Editor).

(the spiritual goal of life). Look at me whole-heartedly and I in turn will look at you whole-heartedly; sitting in this mosque, I speak the pure truth. Neither practice nor scripture is necessary. Have faith and confidence in your Guru. Believe fully that the Guru is the sole actor or doer. Blessed is he who knows the greatness, grandeur and glory of his Guru and thinks him to be Siva, Vishnu, and Brahma (the *Trimurthi*) and Parabrahman Incarnate."

Again he said: "Keep straight on your own course. The World maintains a wall of differentiation between oneself and others, between you and me. Destroy this wall. God is the Supreme Lord. Precious and enduring are His works. Your object will be fulfilled in, due course."

Guru's grace is your only *sadhana*. *Jnana* (spiritual knowledge) comes in its wake."

"There are plenty of paths to the Goal from each place. But the way is rugged and beset with tigers and bears. If one has a guide with him there is no difficulty. The tigers and bears move aside. If there is no guide, there is a deep yawning pit on the way and there is the danger of falling into it."

"Stick to your own Guru with unabated faith whatever the merits of other Gurus and however little the merits of your own."

"We must not give up attachment to our own Guru, but firmly rely on him and him alone."

On one occasion, in order to stress the value of faith, he said: "It is not the Guru who makes himself your Guru, but you who regard him as your Guru by having faith in him. Take a bit of broken pot and regard it as your Guru and see whether your goal or aim is reached or not."

On another occasion, however, stressing the power of the Guru, he said: "I know who are my people and I draw them to me even if they are a thousand miles away, like a bird with a string tied to its foot."

One of the many peculiarities of Sai Baba was his habit of asking for money, often specific amounts, sometimes quite small coins. In general no Guru will do this. Sri Ramakrishna could not even touch money; he felt an actual burning from it. Sai Baba's demands for money were usually symbolical.

"Baba wants two ha'pence, faith and patience."

If an aspirant had absolute, undivided faith in him and intense love, regarding him as the sole Actor or Doer in this world, and this world as belonging to him, and if he bore pain and pleasure with equanimity, Sai Baba would be highly pleased with him and bless him.

Nishta is absolute faith in the Guru, complete surrender to the Guru of the whole body, mind, soul and possessions. The *Taittiriya Upanishad* says, "He who has supreme devotion to God and to the Guru as to God - to that blessed soul these truths reveal themselves."

Sai Baba says, "The Guru is all the Gods. Trust in the Guru fully. That is the only *sadhana*."

An aspirant should remember his Guru as a lover remembers his beloved who is never out of his mind for a moment.

An aspirant should fix his mind on the Guru as a cow does on its calf while grazing in the forest, not forgetting it even for a moment.

An aspirant should think of his Guru as a beggar thinks of the few coins he has scraped together, which he counts every now and then and does not forget even for a moment.

An aspirant should be attracted to the Guru as a moth is to a flame.

An aspirant should be immersed in love for the Guru like a fish in the water which it cannot leave without dying.

Therefore, faith is nothing but self-effacement which says that:

"So long as I existed in me, the Guru did not;

Now the Guru exists, the 'I' is gone

Narrow is the lane of love, it cannot hold both the ego and the Lord."

Sai Baba says that patience is courage.. It ferries you across to the far shore. It gives manliness, eradicates sin and dejection and overcomes all fear.

An aspirant Who has patience bears all the assaults of fate. He endures with equanimity joys and sorrows, pleasures and pains, in fact all the pairs of opposites.

As a matter of fact, all joys and sorrows are due to past karma. One has to reap what one has sown. There is no escape from this, but one can accept it with a calm and quiet mind.

Sai Baba said that worldly joy and sorrow are a mere delusion. A worldly man is forcibly drawn to joy as he believes it to be true happiness, but it is not. It is in accordance with his self-made karma that one man gets delicacies and another stale, left-over food. The latter fancies himself unhappy at that and the former happy; but the result in either case is merely the satisfaction of hunger. Some cover themselves with lace shawls and others with rags; both alike serve merely to cover the body. The pairs of opposites such as joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, are only due to thought. Whenever any idea of joy or sorrow, pain or pleasure, happiness or unhappiness arises in our mind, we must firmly resist it and not give room to it, because it is only a trick played by the mind.

The six enemies: lust, anger, covetousness, delusion, pride and jealousy, are equally delusive. They make the unreal appear real. One must conquer them. Then waves of passion will not rise up. Otherwise, they will enslave and destroy us. If they are eliminated and discrimination put in charge, then delusive pleasures and pains, joys and sorrows, gains and losses will no longer affect us.

The aspirant should have patience at all times, even when everything that he loves or values is lost. The Lord says in *Srimad Bhagavatam* that "if the Lord wants to bless His devotee with His grace and pour His choicest blessings upon him, He will take everything away from him, so that nothing should stand as an obstacle to the blessed union between the devotee and the Lord. A devotee feels the throb of the Lord in good and bad fortune, in pleasant and unpleasant fate, in gain and loss, life and death, and in fact, in everything. That is true patience. That is manliness."

Faith and patience are the manifestations of the grace of the Guru. The more they are developed in the devotee, the more blessed he is, as he silently and surely reaches the abode of the beloved.

There is a common belief that without initiation, there can be no spiritual progress. But this initiation can be either formal or invisible.

Diksha or initiation is the opening of the heart to Divine Consciousness. It can be of three types: (1) By touch, which is compared to a bird sitting on its eggs to hatch them; (2) By sight, which is compared to a fish, merely keeping its eggs in sight; (3) By thought, which is compared to the tortoise, which buries its eggs and merely thinks of them.

The last two methods are those of Sri Sai Baba[4]. 'Look at me whole-heartedly and I will look at you' refers to the second. If an aspirant even thinks of Sai Baba with intense love, Baba turns to him in response; and his response is powerful enough to nurture and guide the aspirant[5]. Baba enters his being and takes charge of his *sadhana* by pushing him from outside and pulling him from within. This descent of the conscious power of the Guru or of God is essential without it there is no fulfilment.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna says:

"Oh Arjuna! Howsoever men approach me, even so do I seek them; all men follow my path from all sides."

Similarly, each devotee saw the deity of his worship in Sri Sai Baba. To some devotees of Lord Rama, he appeared in the physical form of Rama; to Krishna worshippers He showed himself as Lord Krishna; to devotees of Datta He appeared as Lord

4 Also of Sri Ramana Maharshi. (Editor).

5 The present tense is used because this still remains true. (Editor).

Dattatreya; to some Christians, like Captain Hate, he appeared as Christ, while some Vittal worshippers saw Lord Pandurang in him and some Siva worshippers Lord Siva. Some devotees he welcomed in the form of their own Gurus.

Just as different rivers, taking their rise in different places, flow from the East, the West, the South and the North to mingle with the same ocean, so devotees of God in various forms found in Sri Sai Baba, an incarnation of Para-Brahman who includes Brahma (the Creator), Vishnu (the Protector) and Siva (the Destroyer).

Sai Baba insisted on the essential unity underlying the varied forms of religion ; and it was the essence that he was concerned with. He declared, "All Gods are One. There is no difference between the Hindu 'Ram' and the Muslim 'Rahim'. The mosque and the temple are the same. Be wise and united. God will protect you." The great Saint, Kabir, also says: " Hari is in the East, Allah is in the West, Look into your heart,. for there you will find both Rahim and Ram."

"All the men and women of the world are His living forms," said Sai Baba. "Kabir is the child of Allah and of Ram; He is my Guru, He is my Pir."[6]

To establish brotherhood among his Hindu and Muslim followers, Sri Sai Baba arranged a 'Sandal Procession' on the birth anniversary of Sri Rama. Shakkar Dalal, a Muslim of Korahli, was in charge of it. A similar procession is taken out in honour of great Muslim saints. Sandal paste, etc., was put in the flat metal dishes and carried with burning incense in procession to the accompaniment of music through the village, and then, after returning to the mosque in which Sai Baba lived, the contents of the dishes were thrown on the Nimbar and walls. So, on the same day, the procession of the Muslim flags by the Hindus and that of the Hindu Sandal by the Muslims were performed simultaneously. This still continues without any obstruction or objection.

Even in his mosque, Sai Baba allowed the Hindus to worship him in their own way. Some Muslim fanatics tried to persuade him to ban the Hindu practice of worshipping a Guru, but he flatly refused. Once a Maulvi pleaded to be allowed to cut the throats of the Hindu worshippers, but Baba told him: "First cut mine and then the others, because it is on account of me and in accordance with my will that they are coming here and worshipping me."

Seeing this firm attitude of Baba's, they gave up their objection.

The Perfect Master not only becomes God but, after achieving God-realization, comes down to the ordinary mortal consciousness of man. Thus he possesses simultaneously God-consciousness and mental-subtle-gross-consciousness. The world is never without such God-men. Such Supreme Sages of this age have been Bhagavan Ramana, Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sai Baba.

Lord Krishna declared in the *Bhagavatam*: "The *Sadhus* are my heart, as I am theirs. They know only Me and I know only them."

Who is nobler, happier or more blessed than those who bear this relationship with Him, who have fastened Him to the door of their heart with the cord of Love?

6 Pronounced 'Peer'; a name used by Indian Muslims for 'guru'.

Being under the spell of Thy *Maya*, none knows that Thou art the soul. Thou art the heart of all beings. Blind to this truth, they search for Thee outside themselves. Thou art the sole Truth; all else is illusory. The wise know this and meditate on Thee in their hearts.

- Shankara

ABOVE THE THREE STATES

By Nagamma[1]

6th September, 1947.

Last month, while my sister-in-law was staying here, the proof of. the Telugu version of 'Vichara Mani Mala' was received from the printer. In the afternoon Bhagavan corrected it and then passed it on to me. On reading it, my sister-in-law asked me the meaning of *swapnathyantha nivritthi*. I wasn't quite sure myself so I said something or other but she was not quite satisfied. Bhagavan noticed and said: "What is the matter? Is there some mistake?"

"No," I replied; "she is asking the meaning of *swapnathyantha nivritthi*."

"It means absolutely dreamless sleep," Bhagavan said kindly.

"Would it be true," I asked, "to say that a *Jnani* does not have dreams at all?"

"He has no dream-state," Bhagavan replied[2].

My sister-in-law was still not satisfied, but as people began to talk about other things we had to leave the matter there. Only at night she said to me: "It is said in *Vasishta* that the *Jnani* only appears to perform actions but they do not affect him at all. We ought to have asked Bhagavan the real meaning of this."

"You know how compassionate Bhagavan is," I replied. "He will find some occasion to remove your doubts."

When we went to the Ashram at 8 o'clock next morning it so happened that Bhagavan was just explaining this very point to Sundaresha Iyer. Eagerly availing herself of the opportunity, my sister-in-law again took up the subject. "It is not only the dream state but all three states that are unreal to the *Jnani*," Bhagavan told her. "The real state of the *Jnani* is where none of these three states exist."

"The waking state also is equivalent to a dream, isn't it?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied. "Whereas a dream lasts for a short time, this lasts longer. That is the only difference."

"Then is sleep also a dream?" I asked.

"No," he replied, "sleep is an actuality. How can it be a dream when there is no mental activity? However, since it is a state of mental vacuum, it is *avidya* (nescience) and therefore must be rejected."[3]

"But is sleep also said to be a dream-state?" I persisted.

"Some may have said so for the sake of terminology," Bhagavan admitted, "but really there is nothing separate. Short and long duration apply only to the dream and waking states. Someone may say we have lived so long and these houses and belongings are so clearly evident to us that it surely cannot be all a dream; but we

1 For a note on Nagamma's letters see our issue of January 1964.

2 Taken as it stands, this cryptic reply could be misleading. Actually, the *Jnani* experiences the dream-state as much as, but no more than, the other two states of waking and deep sleep. Bhagavan did sometimes have dreams and he might relate one to devotees, just as he might speak about some waking action, but his Real State, as is explained lower down in this letter, was beyond both. The state of the *Jnani* is referred to as *Turiya* the 'Fourth' being beyond the three states commonly experienced. (Editor).

3 When thought ceases it can be superseded either by a blank, as in sleep, or by pure Awareness, as in *samadhi* or *Turiya*. Sleep is, therefore, a sort of dark counterpart of the luminous state of undifferentiated Being-Awareness. That is why Bhagavan says it must be rejected as not being the true alternative to multiplicity but only a simulacrum of it. (Editor).

have to remember that even dreams seem long while they last. It is only when you wake up that you realise it only lasted a short time. In the same way, when one attains *Jnana* (Realization) this life is seen to be momentary. Dreamless sleep means nescience; therefore it is to be rejected in favour of the state of pure Awareness."

My sister-in-law then interposed: "It is said that the bliss that occurs in deep sleep is experienced in *samadhi* as well, but how is that to be reconciled with the statement that sleep is a state of nescience?"

"That is why sleep also is to be rejected," Bhagavan replied. "It is true that there is bliss in sleep but one is not aware of it. One only knows about it afterwards when one wakes up and says that one slept well. *Samadhi* means experiencing this bliss while remaining awake."

"So it means waking or conscious sleep? I asked."

"Yes, that is so," he said.

My sister-in-law then brought up the other cognate question that had worried her. "It is said in *Vasishta* that a *Jnani* seems to others to be engaged in various activities, but actually he is not affected by them at all. Is it because of their different outlook that it seems so to others, or is he really unaffected?"

"He is really unaffected," Bhagavan replied.

"People speak of favourable visions both in dream and while awake; what are they?" she asked.

"To a *Jnani* they all seem the same," he replied.

However she persisted: "It is stated in Bhagavan's biography[4] that Ganapati Muni had a vision of Bhagavan when he was at Tiruvottiyur and Bhagavan at Tiruvannamalai and that at the very same time Bhagavan had a feeling of accepting homage. How can such things be described?"

Bhagavan answered cryptically: "I have already stated that such things are what are known as divine visions." He then assumed silence, indicating that he was not willing to continue the talk.[5]

4 See *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*, p. 96, by Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co. (Editor.)

5 See the footnote on 'Silence', in Nagamma's previous letter in The Mountain Path of April, 1964. (Editor).

AWAKENING

(From a record kept by Ethel Merston)

One day, as we were sitting quietly in the hall, Bhagavan silent, a fine old man at the back, blind, half paralysed and seemingly half mad, suddenly jumped up, his face radiant, laughed loudly and bowed to Bhagavan first and then to all of us repeatedly. He looked so happy and Bhagavan smiled, so radiantly at him, with such love in his eyes, that I wept with emotion. Later the old man told us that at that moment he had got Realization of the Self, for which he had been searching for the last fifty years. His face was so simple and child-like.

BRIEF ETERNITY

By A Devotee

Suddenly I was not. Seeing remained,
Not any one who saw. Thoughts still appeared.
No one to think. And all this was not new,
No change of state, for I not only was not
But never had been; only through some spell—
Ignorance—suffering—sin—what name you will[1]
Imagined that I was.

Or just as well
It could be said that suddenly I was,
For Being, Self, whatever name you give,
Just was, and I was That, no other self.

It is a simple thing—no mystery
The wisdom of the Sages all comes down
To simple being.

Again this state was lost.
Sisyphus-like, the heavy stone rolled down.
Again was need to tear my love from others
Alone through the night, with much toil to strive
To the lost homeland, to the Self I am.

Though a world appear, yet will I not cling to it;
Though thoughts arise, yet will I cherish them not.
More deep the mischief of the imposter me
That sees himself and them—or thinks he sees,
He who complains he has not yet achieved.
Who is it that achieves? Or who aspires?
What is there to achieve, when being is
And nothing else beside, no second self?

1. Ignorance in the Hindu interpretation, suffering in the Buddhist, original sin in the Christian.

Book Reviews

JOEL GOLDSMITH*

When Joel Goldsmith heard of the founding of *The Mountain Path* he immediately sent us his good wishes and took out a life subscription. Our readers will recall the article on 'The Infinite Way in Life' that he wrote for our April issue. He also sent us copies of all his books (about a dozen mostly published by Allen and Unwin in England and Harper and Row in America). This was a valuable acquisition. There is a deceptive simplicity about them. They display no knowledge of Eastern doctrines, employ no philosophical terminology, scarcely ever quote from or even refer to any book except the Bible, and yet they are pure advaitic teaching, the pure doctrine of Identity.

"Your Selfhood is the unconditioned Selfhood. So is my Selfhood. It is wholly spiritual: It is, in fact, Spirit Itself, which has no race, nationality or religion. This Selfhood of you and of me co-exists with God, has co-existed with God in the Is-ness which God is - without beginning and without ending - and this Selfhood has known individual expression throughout all time.

"You are this Selfhood and I am this Self-hood, living as one of God's incarnations; and that Selfhood remains eternal in the heavens, untouched and unaffected by the surroundings in which we find ourselves. With birth, however, there has sprung up around the one Self a sense of human identity, and from the moment of conception this begins to be identified with its surroundings....

"To accept intellectually the truth that we are that unconditioned Self is one thing, but to experience It in a measure is another thing, and to experience It in Its completeness is quite another." ('A Parenthesis in Eternity', p. 138-9).

Never has advaitic teaching been so simply expressed and widely distributed for ordinary people of goodwill in the Christian world. Moreover, this teaching has not gathered dust on the bookshelves; it has led to the founding of the Infinite Way groups throughout the countries of the world.

Although the teaching given to the Infinite Way groups through the books of Joel Goldsmith accords with that of the Maharshi, the path followed is different. It is not Self-enquiry but dwelling on a number of pregnant biblical texts such as: "I and my Father are One ... Be still and know that I am God." "The kingdom of heaven is within you." It will be observed that this has great affinity with the use of Mahavakyas, which was one of the methods recommended by Sankaracharya.

Another difference is that the Infinite Way technique includes the practice of spiritual healing (which has been an important element in the Christian tradition from the beginning) whereas the Maharshi deprecated any use of powers. However, Joel Goldsmith insists again and again that healing must never be the goal to be aimed at. It must be viewed as no more than a by-product of spiritual progress. "The object of the Infinite Way is to develop spiritual progress, not primarily to produce health out of sickness or wealth out of lack." (Ibid., p. 121). Moreover, as he explains in 'The Art of Spiritual Healing', the method of healing taught is not to concentrate on either the patient or the disease or to make any conscious attempt to heal. Having taken cognisance of the patient's needs, the healer is

*** While going to Press we have just heard of his unexpected demise (18.6.64) and sympathise deeply with his many followers and friends.**

simply to turn his mind to God, still thoughts, stop interfering, and allow the Divine Grace to flow through him. He is not to attempt to use God but to allow God to use him. "If we were asked to give spiritual help to someone who needed physical healing, mental stability or moral regeneration, our only possibility of success would be in proportion to our ability to be still, to refrain from using spiritual power, and let spiritual power flow through us." ('A Parenthesis in Eternity', p. 127).

All the books say the same, and yet they are never stale, there is no dull repetition. They remain vital and urgent from beginning to end. Spiritually there is not much to say - that Being IS - that you are That, that the One appears in many forms. But the mind constantly forgets, asserts itself and needs reminding. One can distinguish the reminders that stem from illumination and those of the theorist who repeats what he has learnt. Joel Goldsmith's are of the former category.

WORLD INVISIBLE, A Study in Sages, Saints and Saviours. By Prynce Hopkins. (Traversity Press, Penobscot, Maine, U.S.A., pp. 165, Price not mentioned.)

Dr. Hopkins prefaces his quest with the following statement. "The peregrinations among sages, saints and saviours herein described who, within various traditions - Hindu, Muslim, Christian - seek to penetrate to some reality beyond the visible world were undertaken by me in the spirit of scientific enquiry. From the time I entered the Scientific School at Yale and followed, elsewhere, with study for advanced degrees in psychology, I have been trained to apply the scientific attitude, and, so far as possible, scientific techniques to all problems. I was taught to renounce the hope of absolute certainty but to be content with the formulations which held the greatest probability of accounting for all facts known at the time." This means that his quest was foredoomed to failure because the approach was wrong. He was trying to assess the higher or spiritual knowledge, which is absolute certainty, by the lower or rational, which can only estimate probabilities, whereas it is only by letting go the lower that the higher can be attained. As Chuang Tzu said: "If you get rid of small wisdom great wisdom will come in." The prudent rationalist like Dr. Hopkins wants to investigate the great wisdom by the light of the small before opening the door to it, and of course never discovers it.

Personally he was impressed by the Maharshi who, he says "had achieved *jivanmukti* if ever man did." "Among all whom I met in India, Maharshi remains to me the truest figure of the sage." Nevertheless, he believed that he was discussing with the Maharshi as one philosopher with another and never understood that the Maharshi had transcendental knowledge, absolute certainty, and was trying to show him the way to it.

This limitation is only too common among scholars. As Christ said: I thank Thee O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto 'babes'. What is not, or should not be, is the extraordinary inaccuracy which makes even the superficial information given by Dr. Hopkins unreliable, He tells us, for instance (on page 20) that he met the leader of the Egyptian Sufis and adds: "Because of their greater liberality, the Shi'ahs have been especially hospitable to this famous order of Muslim mystics (the Sufis) who have, therefore, flourished in Persia and given to this country much of its greatest poetry." There is no such thing as Egyptian Sufism, any more than there is Spanish monasticism, nor is there an order called Sufism any more than there is a Christian order called monasticism. There are a number of Sufi orders, each with its own head and all of them international. Furthermore, all of them are

Sunni and none Shi'ah. The great Persian poet-saints were all Sunnis; it is only in more recent centuries that Shi'ism has overspread Persia.

The information given about the Maharshi is also misinformation. We are told that he ran away from home in order to have leisure to think out the answer to the question 'Who am I?' Actually he left home after having already realized the Self and passed beyond the need for thinking out. We are also told that the disciples who gathered round him were simple peasants. They were anything but.

Contrary to the introductory paragraph quoted above, the book is mainly about Buddhist teachings and practices and scarcely mentions Islamic. The occasional expositions of doctrine, Hindu or Buddhist, partake of both the author's faults: the lack of understanding common to rationalists and the inaccuracy peculiar to the author.

HOW GOD CAME INTO MY LIFE: Series I and II. (Bhavan's Book University, Bombay-7, pp. 46 and 53, Rs. 1 each.)

Tales of Divine Intervention in physical form were much commoner in ages of faith than they are now. Even in recent times they are not altogether unknown. Perhaps the best known modern or fairly modern instance is the appearance of Mother Kali to Sri Ramakrishna when his longing and desperation had reached the point of his seizing a sword to put an end to his life. There was one that Ramana Maharshi told about an engine driver who neglected his work to attend a *bhajan*, a session of religious singing. He was threatened with dismissal if it happened again. Nevertheless when he next heard the *bhajan* he was drawn to it so irresistibly that he could not refrain. Next day he went sadly to report his fault but was met with incredulity: "What do you mean? You turned up on duty as usual. You signed the attendance book as usual." He had been impersonated. W. B, Yeats wrote a poem about a similar instance happening in Ireland. There are other cases. It they are less common than in ages of faith it is perhaps because faith itself provides an atmosphere for the materialisation of non-material forces, while materialism impedes it.

The first of these two little volumes records nine very varied cases of Divine Impersonation for the benefit of Indian saints or devotees in earlier centuries - the trusting child from whose hands a statue took food, the dutiful wife who was impersonated so that she could attend *bhajan*, the poet-saint for whom God worked as a servant, and others.

The second volume is modern but not well chosen. Instead of seeking out genuine cases among the humble, the editor has compiled a list of famous persons some of whom qualify only vaguely, if at all, for inclusion - for instance Devendranath Tagore's dream of his dead wife and Annie Besant's conversion to occultism. Except insofar as they quote the originals, the stories are not well told.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI: By Paramahamsa Yogananda. (Jaico, Bombay, pp. 510, price Rs. 5).

Paramahamsa Yogananda is one of those Swamis who is better known in the West than in India. Even after his death his Self-Realization Fellowship continues to flourish in many countries. His autobiography, now republished in a paperback edition for sale in India, was certainly one of the influences that carried him to fame. Many will find it fascinating reading. These who follow the path of Advaita or Identity, however, may be put off by just that feature which attracts another class of reader: that is by the undue prominence of the miraculous powers he ascribes to various Masters and, to a lesser extent, claims for himself, and the supernatural events he describes. Such powers are an *ignis fatuus* which can well lure the wayfarer aside from the path; and followers of a Swami who

describes them with such relish are particularly liable to this danger, even though the Swami himself may warn against it.

- Arthur Osborne

THE GITA AND INDIAN CULTURE: By H.H. Sri Jaya Chamaraia Wadiyar. (Orient Longmans Ltd. Pp. 68. Price Rs. 3).

In giving the main characteristics of Indian culture, the author of this weighty little work underlines its spiritual fundamentals and chooses the *Bhagavad Gita* as best illustrating this tradition. The *Gita* represents a synthesis of the diverse lines of spiritual effort down the ages in India and its message is of perennial import.

The writer dwells upon what he considers to be the crux of the teaching in this scripture, the separation of the self from the non-self, the 'field' from the 'knower of the field', and deepening of this awareness of the Inner Person till its identity with the Supreme Self is realised. He mainly follows Acharya Sankara in his interpretations, which are remarkably catholic.

The author is convincing in his appraisal of the *Gita* as primarily a spiritual rather than an ethical or social guidebook. He keeps close to the tradition of *Upasana* in dwelling upon the proper mode of studying this scripture.

UPANISHADS: By C. Rajagopalachari. (Bhavan's Book University, Chowpatty, Bombay-7. Pp. 67. Price Rs. 1).

In introducing his selections from the Upanishads, Sri C. Rajagopalachariar points out, rightly, that these texts are not meant to replace the Teacher, but are more in the nature of notes of lessons imparted by the sages to their disciples. Though the object of all the Upanishads is one, *i.e.*, Knowledge of Reality, the standpoints are different, the routes taken are many and consequently the lines of exposition are varied. The author takes up a few of these Upanishads, *viz*. Katha, Isha, Kena, Svetasvatara, Chhandogya, Taittiriya and Mundaka, introduces their subject matter in his own words and then proceeds to give some portions of the original with renderings in English, and a connecting and running commentary. In places he differs from the current interpretations and gives his own explanations, which, however, are not always acceptable. The renderings also have, at times (Katha II-23-24), a tendency to move away from the text.

REMINISCENCES OF A JURIST: By Prof. K. R. R. Sastry. (Pub. Author. 29 Dwarka Colony, Edward Elliots Road, Madras4. Pp. 96. Price Rs. 4)

The author of this book is evidently fortunate in being able to look back upon his career of 65 years with an amount of satisfaction that is not given to most. He speaks of his varied innings as an educationist, a lawyer, a jurist, a palm-reader on the sly, a journalist and finally a confident seeker after Realisation, in a racy style and lets the reader have a peep into this bright progression through the diary notes, fragments of correspondence and autobiographical reminiscences brought together in this miscellany.

Prof. Sastry has met a number of spiritual figures and has been, so to say, a theosophist on the fringe. But the Master who has given him real solace of the spirit is the Maharshi. "This sage of Arunagiri, Maharishi Ramana, stilled all my debts [doubts?]. My morning begins with his memory, as I go to sleep with the never ending quest over the Self within the right side of my heart. I feel the strength of a lion when I take refuge in him. My Master has saved me from many a slippery situation in London, New York .... In his life of steadfast wisdom we found the Muni; in his eyes projected towards the Ever-distant we got the Diksha of initiation."

Interesting though sketchy.

- M. P. Pandit.

THE BUDDHA'S ANCIENT PATH: By Piyadassi Thera. (Rider. Pp. 239. Price 30 s.)

Some thirty-five years ago, when my interest in Buddhism was first aroused, the literature on the subject available in English was already quite extensive. Theosophists, agnostics, sympathetic up-to-a-point missionaries and orientalists, each of these last intent on proving a thesis and disproving that of his immediate predecessor, offered the innocent enquirer a rich and bewildering choice of fare. One learned that Buddhism was something excitingly esoteric; it was not esoteric at all but a charter for rather outmoded rationalists; it was a solar myth; it-agreed-with-modern-science; it was a providential soil for the sowing of the gospel; and to add to the confusion, or perhaps to dispel it, there were those recently published essays of Dr. D. T. Suzuki.

True, there were the excellent translations of the Pali Text Society, but these stately volumes were obviously not for beginners. The London Buddhist Society, then in its infancy, was making noble efforts to sort things out, but with so many Right Views in the arena it had its work cut out maintaining peace and endeavouring to offer a fair forum to all protagonists.

Happily all component things are subject to change, and the Buddha's unchanging dhamma is now in the hands of more reliable exponents. In recent years there has been an ample flow of authoritative presentations of the dhamma, both Hina and Mahayana, from scholarly Buddhists who are also living the life and practising its discipline.

The Venerable Plyadassi Thera, revered and erudite pupil of a revered and erudite teacher, the Venerable Vajvanana Sangha Nayaka of Colombo, is the latest in the field and we can only regret that he was not there earlier. Valuable as his 'Buddha's Ancient Path' is today, it would have been even more so thirty years ago.

The Venerable Piyadassi speaks from the heart of the Theravada Establishment and he makes no bones about it. He simply hands on to us the tradition as it was handed on to him, clearly, authoritatively, and, by means of lucid and comprehensive expositions of the key concepts, makes quite sure that we understand what he is talking about.

Any student aspiring to come to grips with an ancient tradition must at least acquire a working knowledge of its vocabulary, for which there is rarely an exact equivalent in the modern languages of the West. Here again our author serves us well. His thoughtful translations of the many words involved are always followed by their Pali original.

After clarifying the basic concepts of *dukkha* and *nibbana*, he leads us with scholarly precision through the threefold division of the Noble Eightfold Path, *sila*, *samadhi* and *panna*, morality, concentration and wisdom. Morality, with its emphasis on loving-kindness and compassion, engages the heart, concentration the will, and wisdom the intellect. Here we have a truly integral yoga.

In the section on concentration it is pointed out that *jhana* or *samadhi*, however lofty, is never an end in itself but simply serves the purpose of purifying the mind and fitting it for the one all-important task, insight into the doctrine and its eventual realization.

The Theravada, ruthlessly pragmatic and frankly dualistic, offers little solace to the metaphysically inclined. *Samsara* is no *Maya* but terribly real. Herein perhaps lies its attraction and value for the modern West. There is no reliance on an external God, so difficult apparently even for an Anglican bishop to believe in, no reliance on a guru, so difficult nowadays to find.

Theravada Buddhism dispenses not only with the need for God but even with the need for a human guru. 'The doctrine and discipline which I have set forth and laid down for you, let them be your teacher after I have gone ...'' This may

have been a necessary warning against false and authoritarian teachers so prevalent in any age, but anyone who has attempted to practise the Way of Mindfulness or the various exercises in concentration described in the Sutta Pitika and Visuddhi Magga soon finds himself in need of a wise and reliable guide not only to clarify the text, but also to save him from the many delusions, excesses and shortcomings to which every psycho-physical complex is prone.

The venerable author offers us the Buddha Dhamma as the solution to our ills. In such a practical book it would have been encouraging if he had told us something of the fruits the Buddha Dhamma is bearing in this twentieth century world. Is the Noble Eightfold Path still producing Arahats, Anagami and Sakadagami? Are there Stream-Winners in the Buddhist lands today?

ALL ELSE IS BONDAGE,
NON-VOLITIONAL LIVING: By Wei Wu Wei. (Hong Kong University Press. Pp. 55. Price H.K. $ 5. 00).

To a generation no longer content with the bland agnosticism of its grandparents and in open revolt against the sophisticated indifference of the inter-war years, Advaita-Tao-Zen is beginning to look suspiciously like the perfect answer. The difficulty is that the answer turns out to be a no-answer. There is simply the realization that there is no questioner and no question. A doctrine whose ultimate ideal is Silence and which demands the abandonment of all points of view is hardly one to write about. A few stray words of Ramana Maharshi or a Zen Master may put one on the right track, but if the unwary enquirer goes on to read a dozen or so books 'about' Zen or Advaita he is likely to find himself back in the quagmire.

Wei Wu Wei is one of the very few exponents who seem aware of this difficulty. Confining himself to short dialogues and aphoristic meditations, he drives home what has to be driven home and scrupulously avoids all side issues. After all, the doctrine has not so very much to say - only the basic truths which are repeated and repeated until they perhaps do their work and conceptual split-mind realizes itself as whole-mind.

Wei Wu Wei's repetitions are never monotonous. His masterly manipulation of the English language and the feeling he gives us of being not so much his 'public' as privileged participants in his own forthright efforts to understand make him an ever stimulating companion on the way. His books are not to be read through but worked with. He may be the star pupil, but we are all in the class together, and it's an exciting class.

When the doctrine went East with Bodhidharma it quickly shed its Indian decor and most of its Aryan metaphysics. The pragmatic but endless sculptures of the Mahayana were reduced to brief questions and answers about everyday things and a providential whack on the head. The question inevitably rises what happens now that the doctrine is taking a bold leap West,. Its first heralds, finding the Oxford dictionary inadequate, were forced to teach us a little classical Sanskrit and Chinese. But language is largely the expression of national psyche and it is not the ultimate goal of the doctrine to make Western minds oriental. In a short foreword Wei Wu Wei discusses the problem he is himself boldly tackling: "It may be doubted whether an entirely modern presentation of oriental or perennial metaphysics would be followed or accepted as trustworthy at present. Probably an intermediate stage is necessary, during which the method should be a presentation in modern idiom supported by the authority of the great Masters, with whose thoughts and technical terms most interested people are at least generally familiar."

His latest attempt to do this is very much as before. It is much shorter than his previous books and perhaps on that account even more potent.

- R. F. Rose

THE GOD-POSSESSED: By Jaques Lacarriere. (Allen and Unwin. Pp. 237. Price 35 s.)

No one has done a greater disservice to Christianity than the Emperor Constantine. Previous to his time it was a persecuted religion, so that the mere fact of accepting it meant rejection of 'this world'. When 'this world' became nominally Christian it suddenly became possible to accept both. A new mode of rejection was needed. In Egypt this took the form of anchorites going out into the desert, living lives of almost incredible hardship; and from this Christian monasticism took its origin.

'The God-Possessed', translated into English by Roy Monkcon, gives a scholarly but vivid account of these Desert Fathers, of the later rise of corporate monasticism among them, and of the spread of both movements into the Syrian and Judaean deserts. The author is inclined, after the style of modern scholarship, to give a psychological explanation of the forces of good and evil that were evoked by this austere life in the harsh and weird conditions of the desert. However, he gives the accounts faithfully and with scholarly criticism and is not altogether blind to the powerful forced that were engendered.

One of the things that gives credence to the accounts is that by no means all the ascetics were revered as saints or credited with supernatural powers. That some attained powers and were stabilised in a spiritual state there can be no doubt. What is most interesting (and the author recognises this) is that some advanced beyond powers and visions back to an apparent normality. He quotes from the 'Treatise of Prayer' of Evagrius Ponticus, a 4th century Egyptian ascetic: "When you pray do not picture the Godhead within yourself, do not let your intelligence receive the impression of any shape at all; remain in an insubstantial state in the presence of the Insubstantial." Even visions of Christ and his angels were to be rejected.

As the final consummation he mentions that transcendence of the ordinary laws of good and evil which the Old Testament indicates by saying that a man has become 'a law unto himself', and which modern Christians protest so piously against when they see it alluded to in Eastern religions: "Man had reached the supreme state of asceticism where his inner cleansing was so thorough that he could, in the words of Diadochus of Photike, 'without sin and even without risk, give himself up to good living and licentiousness, since he was no longer subject to passion and so could indulge in forbidden pursuits.'" It should be added, however, that one sign of this is that he would not want to.

BATTER MY HEART: By Donald Hayne. (Hutchinson. Pp. 303. Price 30s.)

Faith is not the same as intellectual conviction. It is an inner certitude experienced emotionally and felt physically as a vibrant current. It infused the mind and by the mind is directed to the particular dogmas of whatever religion one may follow, but its foundations lie much deeper. Father Hayne does not seem to have understood this. He was a Catholic priest and a lecturer on religion at a university when he found his intellectual conviction waning. At the same time he began to feel emotional stress from enforced celibacy. Genuine faith could have withstood this twofold attack intellectual conviction could not: and the result was stomach ulcers and other psychosomatic illness which pursued him till he left the priesthood.

He tells us then of the vicissitudes of a life no longer sheltered, struggling for means of subsistence, which he found at length in Hollywood. Also of his religious quest. Although put off by the extreme Protestants, he was strongly attracted to the Anglicans. He appreciated the intellectual eminence, the sincerity and the graciousness that he found among them, but was eventually repelled by that lack of fire from which he himself (though he does not seem aware of it) suffered so badly. He meditated for a while with

the Californian Vedanta Society under Swami Prabhavananda and made some progress but not enough to satisfy him. He also tried marriage but (whether due to this same lack of fire he does not tell us) lapsed into wedded celibacy after four years and into divorce after ten.

The book ends rather unsatisfactorily, leaving him reconciled with the Church but as yet only as a layman. A sequel is promised; but unless a real fire is kindled within him it seems unlikely to lead to a satisfactory outcome whether in the Church or outside it.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT, ACCORDING TO VEDANTA: By Swami Prabhavananda, being No. 165-166 of 'Vedanta and the West'. (Vedanta Press, Hollywood, pp. 113, - price $1.50.)

'To me the Sermon on the Mount represents the essence of Christ's Gospel,' Swami Prabhavananda declares. Those who read the article on 'Spiritual Traditions of the Greek Orthodox Church' by Father Lazarus in our issue of January 1964 will remember that he denounces this as a modern heresy. The essence of Christianity, he claims, is the good news of the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ. Certain it is that Christian mysticism has been inspired rather by this good news and its symbolism in the aspirant's own being, while those who are satisfied with the leavings of religion after mysticism has been lost, that is with ethics and devotion, cling rather to the Sermon on the Mount.

Swami Prabhavananda does not go very deep in his interpretation. What distinguishes it is the way he draws parallels to Christ's teachings at every point from Vedanta or from the sayings of Sri Ramakrishna. He has some pleasant stories to tell about Sri Ramakrishna and his immediate followers, especially Swami Brahmananda who was Swami Prabhavananda's own guru.

- Sagittarius

A MOSLEM SAINT OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, SHAIKH AHMAD AL-'ALAWI: By Martin Lings. (Allen and Unwin, pp. 224, price 28s.)

Although Shaikh Ahmad AI-'Alawi died as recently as 1934, the title chosen by Mr. Lings for this study of him is misleading, since he was a conservative turned towards the heritage of the past and took no cognisance of twentieth century trends except to oppose them.

The book begins with an attractive account of the Shaikh by a French doctor who, while remaining an agnostic, developed affection and respect for him. It then continues with autobiographical notes left behind by the Shaikh himself. This makes it rather scrappy.

Mr. Lings is obviously on more congenial ground when he comes to doctrine. He gives an excellent exposition of the Sufi doctrine of *wahdatu'l wujud*, 'Oneness of Being', which he shows to be the same as Advaita or Identity. In subsequent chapters he shows how Shaikh Ahmad himself, following the grand Sufi tradition, also taught this supreme doctrine couched in Sufi terminology and based on the symbolical interpretation of certain Quranic verses.

This leads him into the curious mistake of classing Sufism, and indeed Islam itself, rather on the side of *jnana-marga* than *bhakti-marga*. Actually, a *marga* is a path, not an outlook. There is no reason why a *bhakta* should not understand Advaita. Many of the great Hindu *bhaktas* have. What makes them *bhaktas* is that they follow a path of *bhakti*, that is of love, worship, devotion, submission, using techniques such as ritualistic worship and invocation of the Divine Name. This implies that Sufism is a characteristically *bhakti* tradition and Shaikh Ahmad was a true *bhakta*.

Certainly the Shaikh's poems, with extracts from which the book ends, show rare understanding and ecstatic exaltation. Unfortunately the awkward translation makes them far from easy to read.

Most people who write about a saint nowadays seem to feel the need to equate him with the Maharshi. It is a pity that Mr. Lings thus lifts out of context a saint who, even if not Bhagavan, was gracious and powerful in his own right and stands in no need of comparisons to establish his greatness.

- Abdullah Qutbuddin

SOURCES OF INDIAN TRADITION: Compiled by William Theodore de Bary and others. Published in India by Motilal Banarsidass. (Delhi-6, Varanasi-1, Patna-4.) By arrangement with Columbia University Press, New York. Pp. XXVII and 959. Price Rs, 18.

This compilation is a masterpiece of editorial ability. It brings together extracts Illustrative of Indian wisdom and thought, both spiritual and secular, through the ages, from the Vedas down to Vinobha Bhave. Scholars from the U.S.A., England, India and Pakistan have made contributions conforming to the pattern set by the general editor and his team.

Assisted by Dr. R. Wellen of Columbia (who has written the introduction to the section on Brahmanism, *i.e*. Vedic Hinduism including the Upanishads) and Dr. S. N. Hay of the University of Chicago (who was in charge of the section on Modern India and Pakistan) the Editor compiled this volume as part of the Columbia University programme of general education. The introduction to the section on (later) Hinduism is by A. Yarrow, who was the original editor of the scheme, when it first came up. From London University's School of Oriental and African Studies, A. L. Basham is responsible for the section on Jainism and Buddhism, and J. B. Harrison for Sikhism. I. H. Qureshi of the Centre for Pakistan Studies at Columbia was in charge of the account of the Muslim revival in India from the 19th Century onwards. R. N. Dandekar of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute and Prof. Raghavan of Madras University were in charge of sections on Hinduism.

Others too numerous to mention have contributed to the volume, but it is its planning and arrangement in sections that gives it its peculiar merit. It is so compiled as to give a bird's-eye view of a vast region of wisdom and thought. Readers particularly interested in any area of this region may find this a valuable point of departure from which to launch out into wider study. Those who have already covered the ground in a general way will be interested to find such a wealth of documents and quotations Illustrating it. It might be possible to cavil at some items of inclusion or omission, but that is Inevitable in a book of this scope. The extracts for quotation are chosen in an objective spirit and with sympathetic discernment, the editors keeping themselves well in the background and their introductions being short, though useful.

The bibliography is particularly valuable; in fact it is a compendious guide to further studies. But it would be even more useful if it were arranged according to subjects and not alphabetically.

IN THE VISION OF GOD, Parts I and II: By Swami Ramdas. (Pub. for Anandashram by Bhavan's Book University, Chaupatty, Bombay-7, pp. 270 & 264, price Rs.2.50 each part.)

Swami Ramdas of Anandashram was both an advaitin and a *bhakta*. He said: "Ramdas is like the river Ganges which, having reached the ocean and become one with it, still continues running towards it." He found life more zestful because he had found its culmination. Realization did not deaden life for him but lighted it up. An aura of cheerfulness was always about him and nothing of that gloomy austerity which is sometimes supposed to be an accompaniment of holiness. When he talked he bubbled with joy.

The Swami is a good raconteur with an impish sense of fun. He describes, for instance, a jostling *kumbha mela* crowd wherein a fat lady standing on the prostrate form of a *sadhu* preaches patience to him.

But all this was only the soft green lichen

covering the hard rock of his realization won by austerities deliberately practised and hardships accepted. Miracles sometimes issued from him, rousing the wonder of his devotees but almost apologetically slurred over by the Swami himself. His life and teachings are inseparable, and his autobiographical account is filled with references to his invocation of the Name and complete reliance on it. 'In Quest of God' tells the story of his early wanderings before he attained illumination. The present work, now republished, continues the story up to his settling down at Anandashram where so many thousands of people came to know and love him.

THE DIVINE MESSAGE: By V. Kameswara Rao.

Of the core-scriptures of the Hindus, the *prastana traya*, the *Bhagavad Gita* has been the most widely read and interpreted, not only by great *acharyas* but by men of action also. This is as it should be, for in spiritual life each aspirant follows his own path.

The present book is a consecutive statement of the truths of the *Gita*, which the author regards as an allegory of the soul fighting for *dharma* against desire. There is no very penetrating personal insight, but such unpretentious studies are a stimulus for each one of us to go afresh to the fountainhead.

- Prof. K. Subrahmanyam

SANKARA'S HYMN TO SIVA:
(Sivanandalahari) Translated with commentary by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan. (Ganesh, Madras. Pp. 132. Price Rs. 4.)

Adi Shankara sang hundreds of soul-thrilling hymns to the Supreme Self conceived in many forms. None of these are more inspiring than Sivananda Lahari, a song of the Inner Light, of the fervent heart in communion with Siva. Its flowing cadences and mellifluous style create waves of spiritual emotion in the heart of singer and listener alike. Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, a lifelong champion of Sri Shankara's absolute monism, has given us in this book an able translation and thoughtful commentary on this memorable hymn to Siva.

GITA: By K. Padmanabhan, with an introduction by Swami Rajeswarananda. (Ambika Publishing House, Bangalore-4. Pp. 46. Price Re. 1.00).

In a simple style, K. Padmanabhan has given his own exposition of the yogas of action, love and knowledge contained in the *Gita*. In his rapid survey he also considers the commentaries on this universal scripture by great teachers of various schools, notably Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhva.

Swami Rajeswarananda's introduction enhances the value of the book.

- Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati

THE BLIND SEER

Lines from the Ramana Deva Malai (Tamil) of Muruganar

Like the sun which, never resting,
Seeks and seeks but finds no trace
Of darkness,
So our Master cannot see
Our foe, delusion;
Cannot see,
So blind is he.

Ashram Bulletin

The hot season in Tiruvannamalai is from the middle of March to the middle of June, so this is not usually a time for visitors. In the middle of June the monsoon begins, and although this does not always mean rain - or not before August - it means cool winds and cloudy skies, so that from then on the weather is agreeable.

* * * *

When Morarji Desai, former Chief Minister of Bombay State, former Finance Minister of the Central Government, paid us a visit we were surprised to hear that he came here first as early as 1935 when Bhagavan was not yet widely known and few of the present Ashram buildings had yet been erected. He later sent us a letter confirming this:

> "I stayed in the Ashram for a day and was in the presence of Sri Ramana Maharshi for an hour or more, when I felt complete peace within and had no questions to ask. It was an unforgettable experience of life. When I took leave of him he asked me to leave only after taking lunch, which I had the privilege of having with him. Seeing him convinced me that he was a realized soul and affected me considerably."

Another friendly visitor who had first come in 1935 (though too young then to understand much that was said) was the Yuvaraja of Travancore. We were delighted to find that he was already a subscriber to *The Mountain Path*. He was accompanied by the Yuvarani.

Sri Sayaji Laxman Silam, Lieutenant Governor of Pondicherry, also came on a visit here with his family.

* * * *

SRI VIDYA HAVAN

This annual function came off on 20th March, 1964.

The devotees of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi know that at the time of the Kumbhabhishekam of Sri Mathrubutheswara shrine, Bhagavan consecrated by His touch the Meru Chakra that was made specially for the shrine. A meru in granite is a rare production and rarely comes off all right, and in this case it is undoubtedly due to the Grace of Sri Bhagavan working through the architect Sri Vaidyanatha Stapathi's skilful fingers. When the Meru was fitted in its niche, a few of those present saw Bhagavan sitting in the inner shrine and guiding Sri Vaidyanatha Stapathi in his work. At the conclusion of it all Bhagavan placed his hands on the Meru as well as the Mathrubhutheswara Lingam.

After the Brahmanirvana of Bhagavan, when the devotees were feeling that some tangible activity was needed to restore the spiritual atmosphere of the Ashram, it came intuitively to Sadhu Arunachala (Major Chadwick)[1] that neglect of the Meru at the shrine of the Mother was a great indiscretion, if not a crime against the divinity. So he took it upon himself to organise the worship of the meru and the then management readily agreed with him. And so the Puja started in earnest.

The regular saparya paddathi was followed for the Sri Chakra Puja, with its argala stotras, Chathushshashti upacharas and sahasranama (1,000 names) and thrisathi (300 names). Our thrisathi is unique in that every 20 names of the Mother is preceded by one of the 15 mantras of the Sri Suktha. The thrisathi by itself is sarvartha purthi as said by Acharya Sankara in his commentary on the same. The addition of the Sri Suktha mantras adds greater efficacy to the thrisathi archana. In the usual course comes the ashtothra also (108 names of the Mother). Then comes the solemn offering of sthothras.

1 For a note on whom see our Ashram Bulletin of January 1964.

These pujas, lasting about 3½ hours, go on right through the year on Fridays, full Moon days and the first day of the Tamil month, *i.e.* the day the sun moves into a new sign of the Zodiac. Anybody sending ten rupees can participate in one of these pujas; they should also send their names, nakshatras and gotras.

When one year of the puja was completed Sadhu Arunachala felt that the anniversary of the commencement of the puja should be celebrated and consulted others as to how best this could be done. It was unanimously agreed that the best would be a havan which is a costly affair. The havan is a whole day ceremony lasting from early morning till late in the evening with several oblations. When the offerings in the havan have cooled down, after several days, the sacred ashes are taken out and distributed as prasad to devotees. Contributions to the conduct of this annual function are always welcome.

* * * *

On April 17th we assembled at the grave of Alan Chadwick, who was for many years prominent here, to celebrate the second anniversary of his passing away. Devaraja Mudaliar presided and Venkatakrishnayya made a speech in his honour, both of them devotees of long standing who had known Major Chadwick well.

During the celebration an unobtrusive little man dressed only in a white dhoti and with a green shawl over his shoulders slipped in and sat on the floor among the others. We found out later that he was Basheer Baba of Chennur, a follower of the great Sai Baba, about whom we have an article in this issue. Like his great master, he observes neither Hindu nor Muslim orthodoxy. Like him also, he is credited with miraculous powers. He displayed none here, though on his arrival at the gate of the Ashram, when told that his driver had a letter for the Ashram President, he rightly remarked, with no previous information to that effect, that the President was away.[2] He was strongly impressed by the Presence of Bhagavan and the atmosphere of peace at the Ashram.

* * * *

Mr. Bela Haran of Melbourne, Australia, brought us news of the Arunachala Group which meets every second week under the direction of Mouni Sadhu at 423 Middleborough Road, Box Hill, Victoria, just outside Melbourne.

ARADHANA

Aradhana, the 14th anniversary of Bhagavan's leaving the body, fell as late as May 9th this year. There was such an influx of visitors that even the office of *The Mountain Path* had to be taken over as a temporary camping ground.

The function started at five in the morning with the singing of 'Arunachala Stuti' and 'Ramana Sad-Guru'. The actual puja started at 8 a.m. with the chanting of the Taittiriya and Mahanarayana Upanishads and Sri Rudra Chamaka, Purushasuktha, etc. Ekadasa Rudra Mahanaysa Abishekam was performed. During the arthi after the Sahasranamam (that is during the burning of camphor that marks the end of the puja, after the chanting of the thousand names of Bhagavan), the grace of Bhagavan's Presence was very powerfully felt.

Tiruchuzhi T. V. Natarajan and his party of instrumentalists played Nadaswaram on and off throughout the day, adding greatly to the attraction.

The many guests were entertained to lunch by the Ashram, apart from which there was large-scale feeding of the poor.

In the afternoon Om Sadhu gave a recital of Ramana bhajan.

In the evening Brahma Sri Bangalore Krishna Bhagavathar gave a harikatha on Purandaradasar.

By nightfall most of the guests had departed though a few were making a longer stay.

2 The President went on a pilgrimage to North India and so was away from the Ashram for two months and returned in time only for Aradhana (9-5-64).

RAMANA MANTAP

We referred in our Ashram Bulletin of January 1964 to the edifice that is under construction for the shrine of the Maharshi and the meditation hall in front of it. Progress has been rather slow owing both to the problem of funds and to the extremely skilled nature of the work. The superstructure for the shrine has now been completed out of grey stone from nearabouts of Arunachala, which goes black like marble when polished suitably.

The Pillar

This is only the first stage of what is being undertaken, but the two photographs will show that something beautiful has already been achieved.

A RESIDENTIAL ASHRAM

One significant change that has come over Sri Ramanasramam is that it is beginning to be more of a residential ashram than it was formerly. During the lifetime of Sri Bhagavan, as will be explained in our editorial of January 1965, devotees were not encouraged to make a long stay here. Recently the tendency to lengthier visits and to settling down here has increased and it has begun to be felt in the Ashram that the growth of a residential colony of devotees and aspirants has now become appropriate. Indeed, the Ashram has constructed far more living accommodation since the Maharshi left the body than before and still has an extensive building programme on hand. The immense magnetism of Bhagavan's Presence draws people here, young and old, men and women, Indian and foreign, and it is not always easy to accommodate all who come.

A few recent residents tell here how they came.

RONALD ROSE is an asset not only to the Ashram but to *The Mountain Path*, as those who read his book reviews in this issue will appreciate. Before his vessel came to anchor here it had looked in at various ports of call, including a Theravada monastery in Ceylon.

"I think I can claim that I was one of the most reluctant and unhopeful pilgrims ever to make the journey to Ramanasramam. I had already been wandering around in the East for several years and the prospect of visiting one more fashionable ashram with many Western devotees did not fill me with enthusiasm. I had long ago read Brunton's book and forgotten all about it. And in any case, Maharshi was no longer alive.

"The thing that immediately impressed me about Bhagavan's ashram was the remarkable spirit of freedom that pervades it. I did not then realise that this was a heritage from Bhagavan himself. The President and devotees were kind and helpful but no one started preaching at me or trying to make me a devotee. Sensing my reclusive nature, they tactfully left me much to myself.

"To me this spirit of freedom is still the great feature of our ashram. Bhagavan has drawn his devotees from every nationality, creed, caste and temperament. Yet we are all living happily together, each getting on with his own work and no one interfering with another or laying down the law. We are not making self-conscious efforts to practise brotherly love or charity. It just happens, and to my mind only Bhagavan's living presence among us can account for it.

"Being an insatiable reader, I went first to the

bookshop and, on the advice of the attendant, bought *Self-Realization* and *Who am I?*. I had read many better written and more exciting lives of saints, but inexplicably *Self-Realization* spoke

Ramana Mantap

straight to my heart. After I had spent a few days around the samadhi (shrine) Bhagavan became more real to me than any teacher I had met in the flesh. I felt, and I still feel, no regret that I never actually saw him sitting on the couch in the little hall. How can we regret when he is so gracious to those of us to whom, for one reason or another, he did not choose to manifest his physical presence?

"Like many pragmatic Westerners I was at once taken by the simplicity and directness of Bhagavan's message, which seemed to epitomise all I had learned from other teachings while discarding all that was unduly complicated and superfluous. As a matter of fact, *Who am I?* was at first a little too simple and direct for me. It was only after reading the *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi* and other records of Bhagavan's message that I discovered this little pamphlet actually contains everything the aspirant needs."

* * * *

In contrast to him, HUGO MAIER heard of Bhagavan and his teaching while still in Germany and, knowing immediately that self-enquiry was his method and Bhagavan his Guru, came direct from Germany to our Ashram some years ago and has now settled down here.

"I came to know of Bhagavan through my teacher Heinrich Juergens, with whom I was practising healing. He conducted yoga classes for many years and even concluded them with prayers to Christ, Ramakrishna and Bhagavan. After spending some months in London, I came to the Ashram in 1959 and the moment I entered it I spontaneously felt I was not coming to a new place but to my own home. It is my spiritual home. I have never felt so much at home anywhere, even in Germany. First I was put up in the common dormitory and then in a room outside the Ashram. Then the Ashram President was kind enough to invite me to stay in the Ashram, giving me a well furnished room where I am now living comfortably. Living here at the foot of Arunachala is both sadhana and siddhi, just as the Mountain and the path leading to its summit are inseparable and the same. Here the experience of peace which I already had is deepened and prolonged. What more do I want?"

* * * *

ROBIN NORMAN of Perth, Australia, first came here alone in 1961 and next year returned with her mother. Last year she again came alone, and now she regards herself as a resident, not a visitor. She has been accommodated in a small Ashram guest-house.

"I had been interested in spiritual matters even before I heard about Bhagavan. I read a few books on Hinduism and Tibetan Buddhism. But at the age of 20 I had the intense and genuine

urge to have a Guru and something told me that I would find him in England! Immediately I sailed for England, and there, in a bookshop, the picture of Bhagavan on the dust-jacket of *In Days of Great Peace* attracted me so deeply that I stood motionless for some time before it. I knew spontaneously that he was my Guru. When I learned about him and his Ashram the urge to come here grew in me and within a year I was here. I left after a short visit but came again next year with my mother. I returned to Australia with her and took up a job, but the pull of Arunachala and Bhagavan were so strong that I gave up my job and came back to the Ashram, which is now my home. I experience the dynamic presence of Bhagavan, my Guru, and he guides me every moment."

* * * *

In connection with his poem 'A Beacon Still' in our January issue and his short note on 'Naga Baba' in our April issue, I mentioned how S. P. MUKHERJEE, a retired engineer from Calcutta, built a house and settled down here with his wife.

The above is their house, which they have named 'Upasana'.

"People often ask me why I left my home and settled down here at the foot of Arunachala. What answer can I give?

"If a moth on a dark night suddenly comes across a dazzling brilliant light, he will jubilantly get caught in its rays. Will he care if any one reminds him that the light is neither in his home town nor even in his province and so he should leave it alone? The discovery of the light is the crowning achievement of his life and also perhaps its sole purpose!

S. P. Mukherjee

"My story is short. Ever since my first visit to Ramanasramam in 1951 it was my single-pointed prayer to Bhagavan to keep me here permanently and in order to strengthen my prayer I brought my wife here the following year and she not only prayed fervently but endorsed all my plans for achieving my heart's desire.

Smt. Mukherjee

Once it was the dream in my life to build a small cottage at the foot of the radiant Hill, beside Sri Ramanasramam; today it is a reality. All our prayers have been answered and everything we asked for granted.

"Contented and happy as we are, we sing: 'O Bhagavan! Keep us here for ever!'

"Here we stay and here we wish to die like the moth who buzzes round the light till the dawn breaks!

"One thing only do we know - Ramanasramam Is a beacon still."

* * * *

Ramana Bhakta Sabha

The Ramana Bhakta Sabha of Madras celebrated its annual Guru Puja on April 26th, There was chanting of the Vedas followed by a musical rendering of 'Sri Ramana Gitam' conducted by its composer, Om Sadhu of Tiruvannamalai. Om Sadhu has by now quite a reputation both for composing tunes and leading choral music. Sri M. P. Periasami Thocran expressed grateful appreciation on behalf of the audience.

Om Sadhu

The Sabha meets at 5 p.m. every Sunday at 94, Mowbray's Road, Alwarpet, Madras.

PREM SANGH

The Prem Sangh was founded by Dr. R. Padmanabhan, M.B.B.S., Palghat, a very ardent devotee of Sri Bhagavan on 28-7-47. It is at present composed of twelve families following various avocations. One is a Major in the army, another a teacher while others are businessmen, engineers, etc. Some live in Palghat, others in Calcutta, Bombay, Hyderabad, Madras, Trivandrum, Coimbatore, etc.

The institution has the blessings of Sri Bhagavan, who was informed about its foundation in 1949 and with benign grace nodded His approval

Aims and Objects

The members are to strictly follow Sri Bhagavan's method of Sadhana and spread His message by practice even more than by precept. The families should demonstrate that it is possible to follow the spiritual path while leading a life in the world. This is strictly according to Sri Bhagavan's advice. Members are to perform regular puja to Sri Bhagavan daily, read His works and books about Him and His teachings and meet in any religious centre once a year. The Prem Sangh has conducted annual camps at Palani, Chidambaram, Tirupati, Tiruchendur, Cape Comorin, Palghat, Dakshineswar (Calcutta), etc. The members had also the good fortune to visit the blessed chamber in Madurai where our Master had His illumination and also His sacred birth place in Tiruchuzhi.

During the camp, which normally lasts five to seven days, the members go through a very strict discipline of spiritual practice. There are various programmes such as Probhat Pheri (morning bhajan), Suryanamaskar, Asanas, Puja to Sri Bhagavan, With chanting from the Upanishads, Gita Parayanam, discourses, discussions, bhajan, etc. One day is devoted to silent contemplation. No opportunity is missed to meet and mix with the wise and grwat and benefit by their advice.

Rules of conduct for members

1. All members should consider themselves the children of Sri Bhagavan and hence there should be mutual regard and respect.

2. Tobacco in any form and alcohol are forbidden.

3. Members should take only vegetarian food.

4. They should perform meditation early in the morning, then puja to Sri Bhagavan and again meditation before going to bed at night.

5. In order to develop a good understanding among members, they should correspond regularly.

6. Since health is very vital for sadhana, members should take proper care of the body.

7. No time should be wasted on unnecessary discussions on politics or other non-spiritual matters.

The motto of the Prem Sangh is indicated by the letters PREM as follows:-

P: *stands for Purity of Thought*

R: *for Righteousness of Action*

E: *means that the Members should be ever 'Energetic'*

M: *that their goal is Mukthi*

The members experience the benign Grace of the Lord and have conducted their last two camps in the Ashram. They are thrilled to feel the Presence of Sri Bhagavan and His guiding hand in their day to day life.

This year they camped at our Ashram from 18th to 22nd May. During their stay they delighted the Ashramites with their bhajans, etc. They also arranged for a visit from Sri Anna Subramania Iyer, head of the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Madras. He delivered a lecture in the Ashram hall in English and Tamil on 'Swami Vivekananda on the Upanishads'. the wise and great and benefit by their advice.

Sri Ramanasramam — Life Members

(In continuation of the list already published in our April issue.)

DONOR - Dr. Subramaniam, Thirumullaivayil.

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Somisetty Satyanarayana, Kandukur.
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Om Nath Rohatgi, Kanpur.
A Devotee, Sri Ramana Nagar.
Lakshminarasimha Ganesh Bhatt, Teppadmath.
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(In continuation of the list already published in our April issue)

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Peter Greider, Zurich.

Letters to the Editor

I have followed your name for many years and given lengthy notices to Ramana Maharshi's books, which are my treasures. Among all the Masters he is the only one whose presence is often vivid and alive to me, as now when writing to you. It is like a blessing.

We have waited for such a journal for years, and I am sure it is winning acclaim the world over. How necessary is the subject matter of your own (second) editorial, especially to Christians owing to their erroneous teaching. And that is a magnificent article by D. E. Harding, author of 'On Having No Head'.

In connection with my work I am obliged to glance at countless numbers of magazines, but yours is the only one that I read from cover to cover. It Is a joy and a challenge.

Clare Cameron, Editor, 'Science of Thought Review'.

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Many congratulations on the second number of 'The Mountain Path'. How good Douglas Harding was! ... My only quarrel with him is that he will call his way of doing the *vichara* 'Zen'. The discipline or technique is quite different in Zen, though the question asked is the same. The *koan* which is equivalent to 'Who am I?' is 'Who is repeating the Buddha's name?' or who is doing whatever one is doing at the moment? The stress is on the 'who?' and not on the Buddha's name. Then there is: 'What is my face before I was born?', which is, to me, really the same as 'Who am I?'. This answers K. K. Ghosh's letter. Both *koans* are found in Ch'an and Zen.

G. J. Yorke, Gloucester.

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Liking very much the poem 'Ahad' by Arthur Osborne, may I ask you to explain in one of your next issues the meaning of the title, Ahad? The poem wanted me to translate it into German and I enclose herewith a copy of my translation. Maybe you have use for it.

Ursula Mumler, Lugano.

The poem 'Ahad' is based closely on certain lines from the Qur'an and the title is the Arabic word for 'One'. Thank you for the German translation but too few of our readers speak German to justify our publishing it. — Editor.

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The reproduction of the Maharshi's photograph is excellent. The living, enlightened eyes and the benevolent smile are most encouraging for one seeking to make better and more constant efforts to realize the Self.

In the April issue a correspondent from Alabama objected to these pictures, but his objections were suitably answered by the Editor. Even an unlettered person can derive inspiration from such a picture - one who lives by intuition and not by intellect.

D. F. Panday, Bombay.

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A publication like this is sorely needed world-wide. Others in its general area - like 'The Middle Way' or the East-West philosophical journals - are excellent, but they do impose limits, either of one religious outlook, however broad, or of speculative rather than intuitional approach. Those of us at the bottom of the Path, but seeking light from whatever source is today shedding it, need such a journal as yours. Its regular - but too rare (may it one day be monthly) - advent can provide a seasonal quickening that purblind and halting spirits require.

Le Roy A. Born, New York.

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The second number leaves the first far behind. Even Sagittarius is getting more mellow! All the articles are excellent, each in its own way.

In the reviews I admire your deftness in meeting claims of unicity (whether for Ramakrishna or Jesus) without questioning attainment. Buddha's banter of Sariputra is an excellent stick with which to beat all such dogmatists.

The Letters to the Editor and the comments they elicit provide a very lively and informal conversation, reminiscent of old days in the Hall. Apart from your reply to the gentleman from Alabama, the cover picture of the temple tank in front of the mountain and the advertisement of the Sri Chakra Puja show that Bhagavan rejected nothing, not even ritual.

Prof. K. Swaminathan, New Delhi.

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(*To the Publisher*) We received the sample copies you sent us and our people were delighted with them. They found the magazine instructive, helpful and inspiring. We could have sold more copies….

Will you kindly send us 10 copies of the present (No. 2) issue and 10 copies of each issue thereafter until further notice....

May I congratulate you as the publisher and Mr. Osborne as the editor upon very successful launching of this outstanding new magazine. It will bring Bhagavan's Grace to many thousands who are hungrily reaching for peace and enlightenment.

Church of Spiritual Philosophy and Vedanta Center, St. Petersburg, Florida, U.S.A.

* * * *

(*To the Managing Editor*) The second issue also has come out in a grand manner and the illustrations add to it. The variety of articles will just suit the different types of devotees. I realise the great responsibility you have undertaken and the hard work you have. I hope Sri Bhagavan's Grace will work through you in making devotees appreciate the high quality of future issues also. I shall do my best to support the journal from here.

P. V. Somasundaram, Bombay.

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Please accept my congratulations on the fine job that you and Sri Ganesan have made of '*The Mountain Path*'. It is an excellent production. Long may it prosper as a worthy vehicle of the Grace of beloved Bhagavan.

As one for whom four months' practice of Bhagavan's 'Who am I?' at Sri Ramanasramam brought greater understanding and contentment than did four years cogitation on Anatta in Buddhist monasteries, I found the 'Ashram Bulletin' particularly inspiring. Very moving was your description of Bhagavan's last hours in the body.

I have often wondered just how Bhagavan's teenage experience of bodily death was instrumental in his realization of Enlightenment. Recently I came across the following words on page 20 of Sri Krishna Prem's '*Yoga of the Kathopanishad*': "The mystic death which played an essential part in all the ancient rites of initiation is in fact the gate through which must pass all who seek the light of wisdom. Psychologists will explain it in terms of introversion and ethical writers in those of self-abnegation and what they write will all be quite true. It is these things but it is also much more, for here, as always, the ancient symbols have a wealth of content to which it is impossible to do full justice with our modern conceptual thought. The Mystic Death is a real death and, like all that is real, it has its dangers... It has also been said that 'he who would cross the threshold of any world must leave fear behind him.'"

Does this not relate directly to the answer that He, as a fearless schoolboy, gave to the personal query 'Who am I?'?

F. Allen, London.

In most cases, of course, the initiatic death is a symbol of the real spiritual death and rebirth; in Bhagavan's case it was the real thing — Editor.

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The magazine is very fine and indeed worthy of its source. I was particularly interested in the news

of the Ashram, and I am glad that it has decided to establish Sri Ramanasramam Charities, which must certainly help to maintain the Ashram in its place of eminence.

Rex Uhl, Berkeley, California, U.S.A.

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The 'Ashram Bulletin' brings one into closer relationship with Sri Ramanasramam and other devotees. This is something that I have felt the need of, this contact with other devotees. It helps a person (weak like myself) on the path. I feel that it is what is required by many like myself who never saw the Master in his physical body. Even though his presence is felt in one's own being, a contact on this physical plane with those who knew the Master in the flesh is often longed for; also to know of others' who have found their way to the Master after his *Mahasamadhi* (physical death) must be a great help to all.

Fred Wilson, Scarborough.

* * * *

I went through it from cover to cover and enjoyed it thoroughly, particularly the Ashram Bulletin and book reviews. The only suggestion I have is that you should try and include articles on the lives and teachings of saints and mystics.

Miss Sarah Farrand, London.

Up to now each issue of 'The Mountain Path' has carried an article on some saint or mystic. We hope to continue the series and invite readers to send in such articles. — Editor.

* * * *

Kindly continue with the wonderful photos of Sri Bhagavan. My sincere wishes for a glorious success for '*The Mountain Path*'.

Hale Sherland, Vancouver.

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Please continue your delightful articles on Lord Arunachala. It was a joy to read the article in the April issue.

N. R. K., Madurai.

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After reading the article on Arunachala I realised why Bhagavan called Arunachala '*Hridaya*' (the Heart). I felt a spiritual exhilaration beyond description.

G. R. Trivedi, Rajahmundry.

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T. K. S. seems to have tripped up in doing his *Pradakshina* around the Hill. Dakshinamurti is not the North Pole nor the Southward-Facing (p. 108). He is the Regent of the South, even the South itself. Therefore he would *ipso facto* face the North. Even T. K. S. says on pp. 106-7 (and this is a tradition of the Hill) that this *Siddha Purusha*, who is Siva, dwells on the northern slope, so he would be sitting facing the north.

N. C. Vakil, Bombay.

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Mr. Vakil takes objection to the statement that the Guru is the North Pole and traditionally faces South. 'North Pole' is used here in the sense that it is the Dhruva, the Supreme, to which our attention is always riveted. We always cling to the Supreme Guru, that is Lord Siva, who is Dakshinamurti.

A careful reading of the lines objected to will show that 'southward-facing' is given only as "one meaning" of Dakshinamurti. It is the meaning that is according to the Puranic traditions. But having lived at the Blessed Feet of Bhagavan Sri Ramana I have heard from him that Dakshinamurti is Dakshina + Amurti: 'Dakshina' being 'All Prowess', the power to hold *Maya* under his control, and 'Amurt!' meaning 'Formless'. So Dakshinamurti-Ramana, though appearing to have a form, was and is always formless *Arupa Atma*, yet with absolute control and sway over *Maya*. That is why Dakshinamurti is described in the

Dakshinamurti Stotra as: "*mayaviva vijrumbhayath yapi maha yogiva yassvachchaya thasmai sree gurumurthaye nama idam Sri Dakshinamurtaye*." — "To Him who like a magician or even like a yogi, displays by His own will this universe .... created by *Maya*, to Him who is incarnate as the Guru, to Him in the Effulgent Form facing South, to Him be this prostration."

T. K. S.

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I was delighted with Joel Goldsmith's article 'The Infinite Way of Life'. He is a true Advaitin and his teachings are having a wide effect in the world. I sincerely hope '*The Mountain Path*' will encourage such contributions which are not merely intellectual but are based on true God-experience.

T. S., Tiruvannamalai.

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'*The Mountain Path*' is a lovely journal, just suited to Sri Ramana.

Lalita Kumari Devi, Dowager Maharani of Vizianagaram, Banaras.

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I am delighted to have '*The Mountain Path*' and am enjoying reading it and finding it most helpful and instructive.

Kay White, Farnham, Surrey.

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I have gone through the articles and find them of substantial value for those who like to probe into the hidden values of life in its relationship to what we call spirituality.

Dr. W. Noelle, Embassy of West Germany, New Delhi.

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I read all the fine articles with interest. I am sure your magazine will be a success with all the thousands of devotees all over the world. May Bhagavan bless all your undertakings. May he bless each one that has a part in it.

Eleanor Pauline Noye, Hollywood,

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Your request to write in experiences of the blessings and guidance of Sri Bhagavan will inspire many devotees, and for my part I give below my own experience, as follows.

Ramkrishna G. Kulkarni, Ujjain

Your contribution is very welcome and will certainly be published. It will probably appear in our issue of January 1965 — Editor.

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I would like to say how much I enjoyed reading the first issue of '*The Mountain Path*' and look forward to the next issue which, I believe, will reach me any day now.

I cannot help but feel that to the Realized Man the phenomenal world must also be a different place. Would you agree that, the source of all being perfect order and harmony, the realized man would express that order and harmony through his consciousness and thus find the same order and harmony in every aspect of this phenomenal world - that is apart from certain operations of karma? Would you agree that all such phenomena are but a deformation of Pure Consciousness operating as lesser powers?

The Maharshi said that concentration was holding to one thought but even that thought must go before Realization. Did he mean by this realization of the Self, or the realization of that last and single thought, which would appear to he in accord with psychological teaching?

Dr. A. Colin Corah, Keswick, England

Certainly a realized man, having perfect order and harmony in consciousness, finds order and harmony reflected in the phenomenal world also - not even excluding the operations of karma. Many saints have undergone sickness, poverty or

imprisonment, but has any one ever heard of a saint complaining of them or calling them a disharmony?

All powers and phenomena are, of course, particularisations or deformations of Pure Consciousness. What else is there?

Concentration, according to the path of Self-enquiry which the Maharshi taught, does not mean holding to one thought but eliminating all thoughts. He did, however, sometimes refer to other less direct paths in which the mind is trained to hold to one thought in order to keep it still and keep other thoughts out. In either case the state to be aimed at is pure thought-free Consciousness, and this is the Self — Editor.

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My first question is: Who am I? This question has been eluding me for many years past, as I am sure it has quite a few others. My problem consists of this, that having used that question as a starting point according to the instructions of Bhagavan, the question recedes into a feeling (as maybe inner quests must of necessity) or sensation moving around a vacuum-like centre. Presuming that this is not too stupid a procedure (if we can call "setting the dogs on the scent" a procedure), I am struck by the phenomenon that when the monkey-mind returns to the scene he does so with a slight but, for me, striking variation of the question from 'Who am I?' to 'What is I?' (never 'Who is I?' or 'What am I?') To me the sound of 'Who am I?', pronouncing it inwardly and waiting in the stillness that surrounds the questioner, seems just a tinge too logical and grammatically correct, whereas its sense is, of course, neither.

And, coming out of the stillness, the monkey experiences greater peace and satisfaction and the dogs seem to sniff more intensely with that variation 'What is I?' in the air.

In short, if it weren't preposterous to think so, I would feel that variation to be an improvement - for myself. Since I understand that Bhagavan on numerous occasions expressed himself in English, giving instructions for the use of the query 'Who am I?', curiosity has been aroused as to the Tamil and Sanskrit forms of the question as compared with the variant 'What is I?'. Are they, either grammatically or otherwise, near to each other in either language?

J. De Reede, Elba.

It is often helpful to vary the words of a formula, as they may become a fetish. In this case, however neither the question nor the answer is really verbal. The question is a turning inwards to the reality of oneself and may or may not be accompanied by a form of words;. the answer is an indefinable consciousness of I-ness. The expression "a sensation moving around a vacuum-like centre" shows that the writer is certainly on the track of it.

As a point of fact, the Tamil would be 'Nan yar', literally "I-who?" — Editor.

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